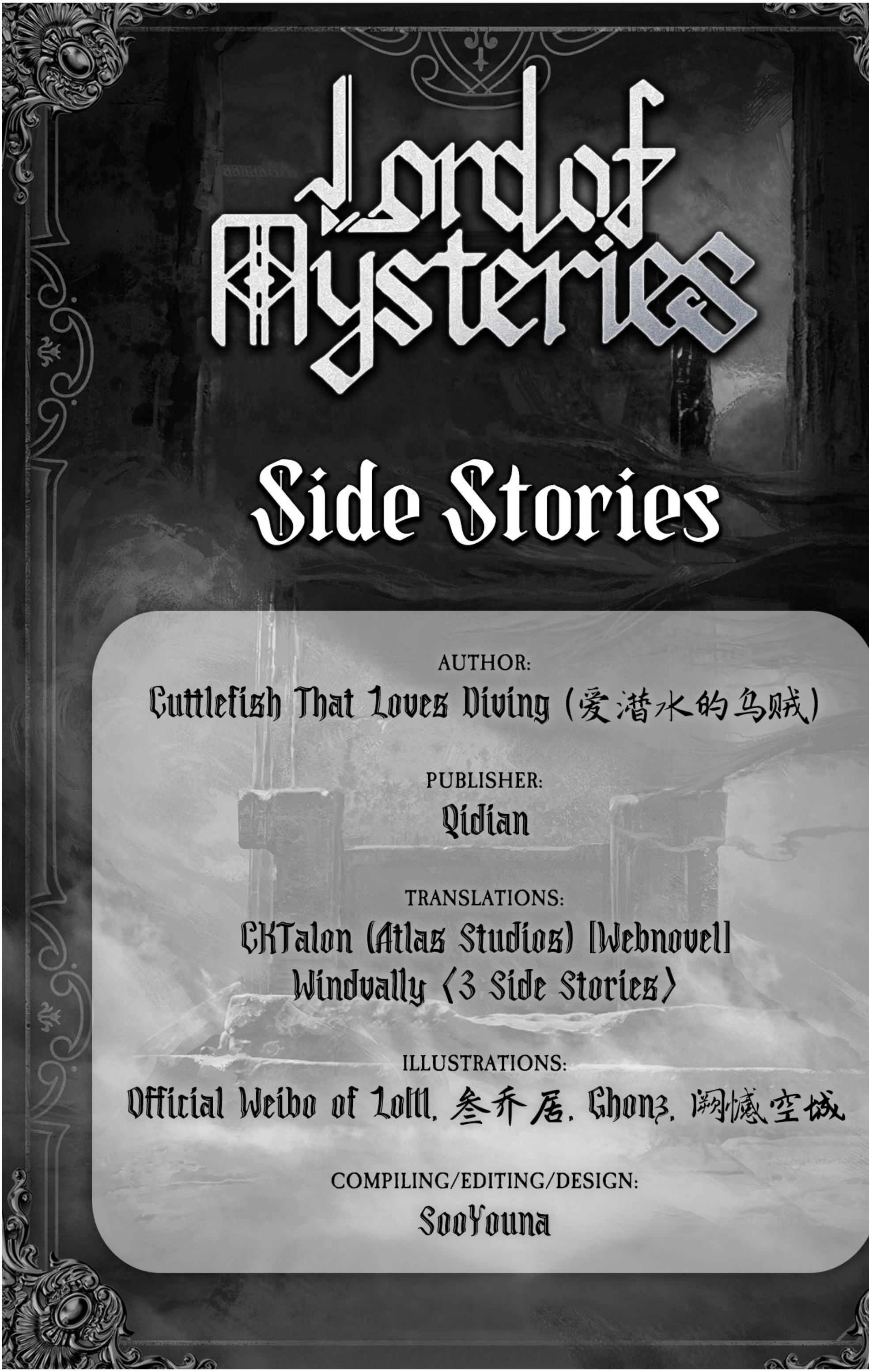
Lord of Mysteries

Side Stories

Cuttlefish That Loves Diving



Lord of Mysteries

Side Stories

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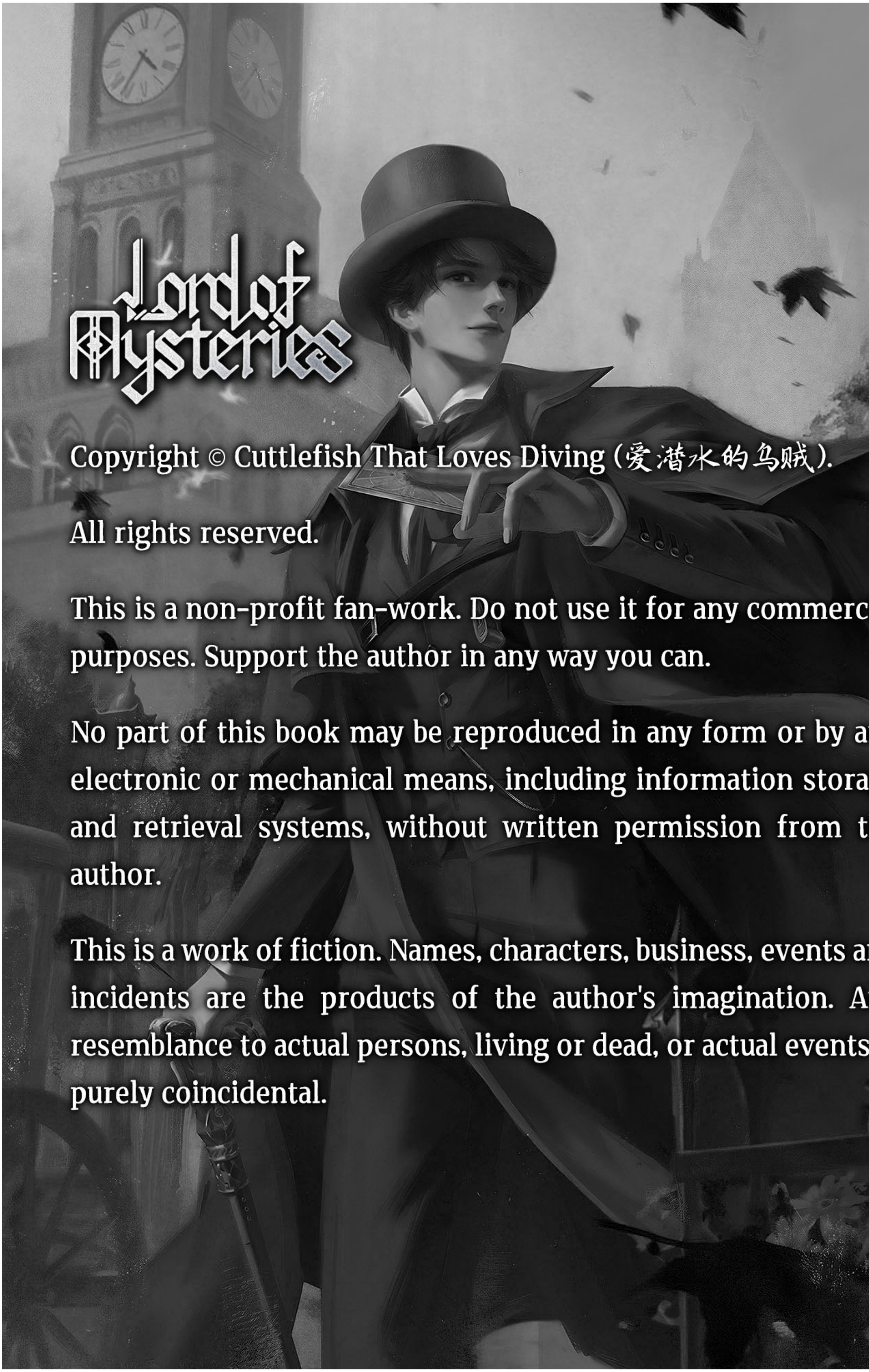

Lord of Mysteries

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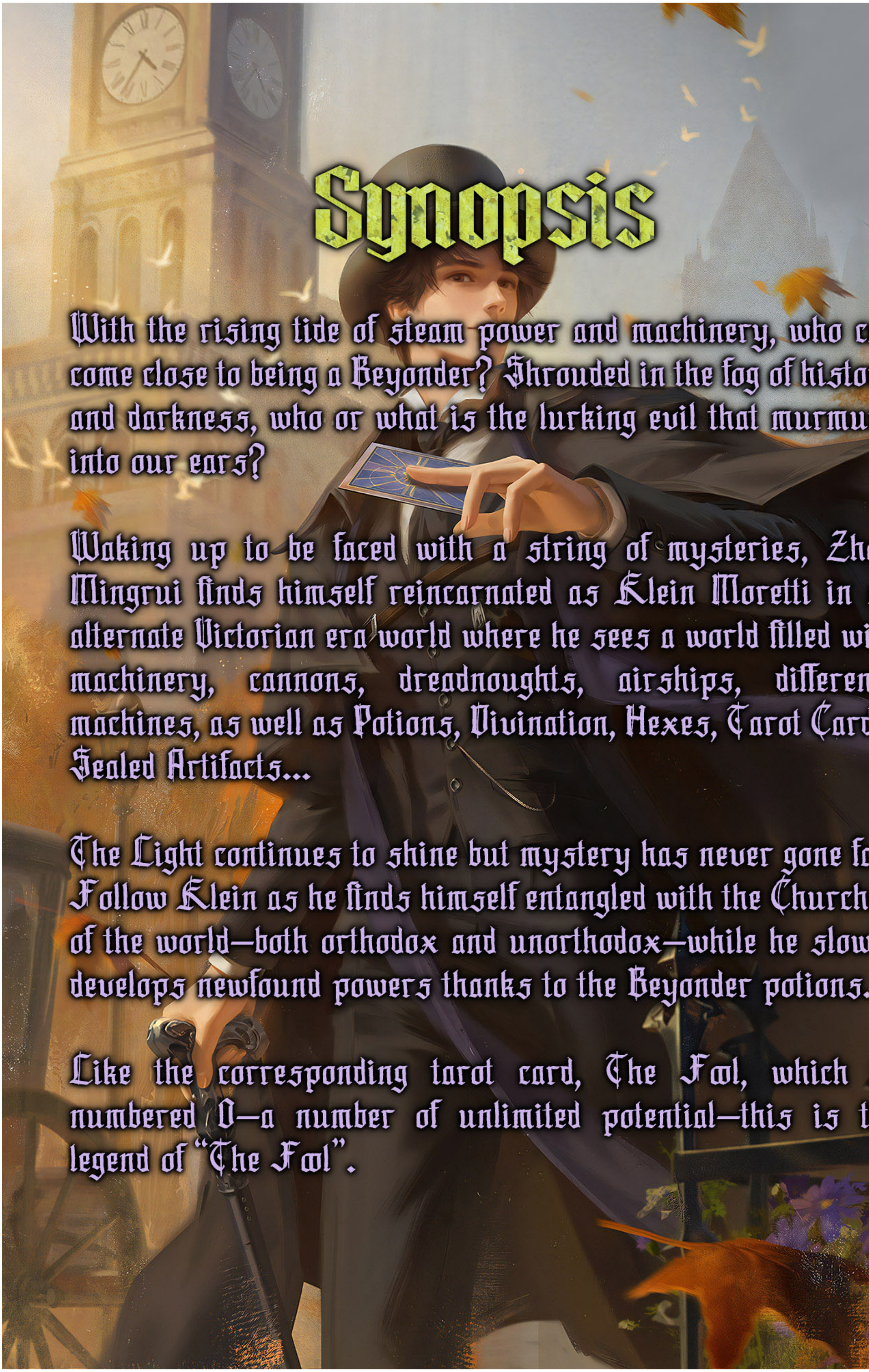

Synopsis

With the rising tide of steam power and machinery, who c come close to being a Beyonder? Shrouded in the fog of histo and darkness, who or what is the lurking evil that murmu into our ears?

Waking up to be faced with a string of mysteries, Zh Mingrui finds himself reincarnated as Klein Moretti in alternate Victorian era world where he sees a world filled wi machinery, cannons, dreadnoughts, airships, differen machines, as well as Potions, Divination, Hexes, Tarot Car Sealed Artifacts...

The Light continues to shine but mystery has never gone fo Follow Klein as he finds himself entangled with the Church of the world—both orthodox and unorthodox—while he slow develops newfound powers thanks to the Beyonder potions.

Like the corresponding tarot card, The Fool, which numbered 0—a number of unlimited potential—this is t legend of "The Fool".

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Chapter 1395: An Ordinary Person's Daily Life

(1/8)

“You have a chance to meet His Holiness.”

Barton heard a man in a dark-blue bishop robe say to him.

No matter how hard he tried, the other man’s face was indiscernible. It felt like his face was covered with a gray, blurry gas.

Of course, this wasn’t an important matter. As a devout believer of the Lord, it was definitely the greatest honor for Barton to meet a proxy of “Him.”

This made him so excited that he couldn’t say a word. His body trembled as he followed the bishop to the back, entering the hall one step at a time.

Barton couldn’t describe the hall in detail either. He only knew that it was very grand and magnificent, one that exuded an immense pressure. He could only bow his head obediently.

Finally, he arrived in front of the steps.

At that moment, he seemed to receive permission as he subconsciously raised his head.

Then, he saw a golden retriever.

This dog wore a deep blue, gorgeous robe that resembled a curtain. It wore a papal tiara with many gems embedded in it. It sat on a huge throne and watched him quietly.

"…" Barton was stunned.

This, *this is the Pontiff?* Barton was shocked and panicked, a strong sense of fear rising in his heart.

He opened his eyes abruptly and saw the morning light illuminating the ceiling.

Phew… Barton sat up, panting slightly, trying to extricate himself from the influences of the dream as quickly as possible.

"What happened?" His wife sensed something amiss and got up.

Barton shook his head.

"A nightmare."

He didn't tell his wife the truth—he dreamed that the pontiff was a golden retriever.

He could bet that his wife would say in horror, "How can you have such sacrilegious thoughts?"

If that were to happen, he could only shrug his shoulders and say, "Just kidding."

I can't bring my troubles into my family life. This is a paradise for humans, meant for relaxing… Moreover, women can hardly understand more profound questions. They have traits in being perceptive to thoughts, and love… Barton didn't dwell on the contents of his dream anymore. He got out of bed and went to the bathroom to brush his teeth.

After breakfast, he kissed his wife and children before leaving his residence and taking a trackless public carriage to the working district at the edge of the city.

He was under the employment of the Loen Relic Search and Preservation Foundation with a sizable salary. In places like the capital of East Chester County, Stoen City, he was considered to be upper-middle class.

On the way, Barton studied the streets outside out of boredom.

Due to not being directly affected by the war, Stoen City still retained its former prosperity. Carriages, bicycles, pedestrians, and wild dogs came and went; it was lively and noisy.

Barton was already used to such a scene. He didn't have much of an impression of it, but the dream from last night made him uncomfortable every time he saw a dog on the street. It was as if it was the incarnation of the pontiff, one that he needed to bow to and greet.

"Holy Lord of Storms, please forgive your penitent servant." Barton raised his right hand, clenched his fist, and gently struck his left chest.

After a while, he arrived at the Loen Relic Search and Preservation Foundation. As he greeted his colleagues, he walked into his office.

After hanging up his hat and coat, Barton relaxed and leisurely prepared some special black tea for himself—he was almost middle-aged, and his energy was dropping. He always hoped to use a simpler method to supplement his body without suffering any hardship.

After preparing the black tea, Barton picked up a few newspapers on the desk and wanted to prep himself before starting work.

The economic situation in Backlund last season has greatly improved…

Another pirate at the level of King has appeared in the Sonia Sea and the Berserk Sea, *Queen of Stars…*

Desi Bay Fruits Trade Fair…

After reading the newspaper slowly, Barton took a sip of black tea and started his work.

A letter from Vernal? Barton found a letter from an old friend as he examined the documents on his table.

He was an archaeologist who had a close relationship with the Loen Relic Search and Preservation Foundation.

Barton immediately took out a letter cutter, took out the letter, and read it seriously.

“My dear friend,

“My students and I found some interesting ruins in the mountains of Sivellaus County. Perhaps they originated from refugees from the Fourth Epoch…

“In that period of history that we don’t know much about, they left the city for reasons unbeknown to us. They entered the forests, and stopped interacting with the outside world again. They existed in the form of a tribe…

“They might still be guarding something, but it has long been drowned out by time, leaving behind only ruins and corpses…

“My students and I will excavate this place while employing conservation practices. We hope to find something more useful that can help us restore the history of the Fourth Epoch. I wonder if your foundation is interested in this.

“…Here, I solemnly invite you to send a team over to confirm if our work is real and effective…”

Going into the mountains… The first thing that surfaced in Barton’s mind was not the relics or the history, but the buzzing mosquitoes, the humid, dark environment, and the camp that became a temptation to the wild beasts.

He shook his head and picked up a pen and paper. He prepared to file this letter and send it to his superiors.

Chapter 1396: An Ordinary Person's Daily Life (2/8)

After drafting the document's header, Barton was preparing to add some details into the document when he realized that Vernal hadn't submitted any supporting information.

Does he think that he can apply for funding with just a letter by simply relying on his relationship with the foundation? Barton looked around the table and muttered to himself in puzzlement.

In his opinion, Vernal wasn't an arrogant archaeologist. Apart from being feisty and impatient, he was considered a typical Loen gentleman in all other aspects.

Under normal circumstances, when one requested funding from the Loen Relic Search and Preservation Foundation, they had to provide a lot of information, such as photos, ancient supplementary documents, and other related information other than a cover letter that described the project. Otherwise, the foundation wouldn't be able to do a review and make a decision, much less spend large amounts of gold pounds to send a team to the project location for inspection.

Or rather, could it be that Vernal Fnarr was just too careless and forgot to send the information out as well? Of course, with the relationship between Vernal and the foundation, it's entirely possible the upper management will send a person or two to arrange a meeting to verify the information when they see it... Yes, as a friend, I should still help him... Barton shook his head and didn't think further. He stood up and walked to the bookshelf.

He then stretched out his right palm and used his fingers to stroke the back of a book spine, selecting the information he needed.

Finally, he took out a few books and journals, and combined his various viewpoints to give a detailed description of the history of the Sivellaus mountain range in the document he was about to submit.

“In the scientific community, there’s a common viewpoint:

“In a period that’s unknown to be long or short, the Solomon Empire and the Tudor Dynasty coexisted in the Northern Continent, and their border could very likely be situated where the Hornacis mountain range and the Feynapotter Highlands are today.

“There’s a high chance that the Hornacis mountain range’s extension in Sivellaus County was a contested ground between both parties…”

Barton didn’t endorse Vernal. He only provided references to show that there were indeed possible ruins of the Fourth Epoch in the mountains of Sivellaus County.

This way, if it was proven that Vernal was lying, no one would hold him responsible, because all of the descriptions came from famous historians. Barton had only extracted snippets in a selective fashion.

At the end of the document, he listed out his references:

“…’Private Historical Research of Sivellaus County’, Azik Eggers, Khoy University's Department of History lecturer…"

After completing this document, Barton read through it from top to bottom and modified his choice of words and certain sentences.

Then, he took the draft and entered the clerk's room next door. He asked them to type up a formal document with mechanical typewriters.

The Loen Relic Search and Preservation Foundation had always hired plenty of female employees. From the lowest level of ordinary clerks to the deputy director of the upper echelons, at least half of them were female.

Barton actually had some things to say about this, but he didn't, nor did he dare to object. He could only choose to accept the state of things.

Of course, he had to admit that when he needed to wait, it was quite nice watching these young female clerks busying themselves.

At least it enriches the colors here… As Barton listened to the tapping sounds, he mumbled silently.

Once the documents were done, he signed and submitted them. Then, just like before, he continued with his work as usual.

This included but wasn't limited to the trial projects, providing professional opinions and gathering research materials for the foundation's papers and commentary.

A day quickly passed, and Barton left the company at six in the evening. He took a public carriage and returned home after an hour.

This was a common occurrence in all the major cities in Loen. That was why high tea became a trend—after lunchtime from 12 to 1, it would be half-past seven or eight in the evening before people reached home. If not for high tea sessions, most people would definitely be abnormally hungry.

Of course, this was only limited to the middle-class and above. Many poor people might only eat two meals a day. Moreover, couples with the conditions to work would both be working. They would have to prepare dinner after returning home at around eight in the evening. And the food wasn't for their enjoyment.

"Vernal came to visit you in the afternoon," Barton's wife said casually as she helped him take off his coat and hat.

"Vernal?" Barton was taken aback momentarily.

The archaeologist who discovered a Fourth Epoch ruins in Sivellaus County had returned to East Chester County?

As soon as he said that, Barton frowned and muttered to himself, *He really did forget to send the information, so he came back personally?*

No, there's no need to go through so much trouble. The Royal Mail is rather reliable.

Besides, he should know that I'll definitely be at the foundation if *it's not a weekend. Yes, I might've been sent elsewhere for an inspection review…*

With this in mind, Barton asked, "Where is he?"

"He only waited in your study for fifteen minutes before he left," Barton's wife said.

Barton pressed, "Did he say which hotel he's living in? When will he come again?"

The archaeologist, Vernal, was from East Chester County, but he wasn't a Stoen resident. He didn't have a place here.

"He didn't say. He seemed to be in a hurry." Barton's wife paused for a moment before continuing, "He looked very impatient."

Barton touched his receding hairline and nodded gently.

"I'll be in the study."

His study was on the second floor, and there were many bookshelves and some porcelain placed there. He wasn't too passionate about porcelain, but he actively searched for unique items.

After some searching, Barton didn't find any note or letter left behind by Vernal.

He quickly threw the matter to the back of his mind.

This was his usual rule—he tried not to be troubled by work once he got home.

After dinner, he shared a beautiful time with his wife and children, then quickly washed up and went to bed.

In the dead of night, he suddenly woke up and opened his eyes.

Ever since the danger he encountered during an archaeological excavation ten years ago, Barton had gained a sense of awareness—spiritual perception—that exceeded what ordinary people had. He could always sense some movements that others couldn't detect. For example, others might realize that someone was looking for them when visitors arrived at the door, but Barton could sense whether the other party was related to him once they walked down the corridor.

Someone sneaked in… Barton suddenly sat up, his eyes wide open.

He looked at his wife who was sleeping soundly beside him and didn't wake her up. With very slight movements, he flipped out of bed and removed the double-barreled hunting rifle hanging on the wall.

After grabbing the rifle, he gently opened the door and looked down the corridor.

This place was shrouded in the darkness of the night, and a faint crimson glow outlined certain objects.

Barton didn't hesitate. He entered the corridor and scanned the area.

However, he didn't find the burglar.

Was I mistaken? Barton turned around, feeling a lack of confidence.

There was no sign of any of the rooms on the second floor being opened.

After thinking for a while, Barton came to the door of the study, grabbed the handle, and gently twisted it.

The door opened silently. Everything inside was immersed in the darkness, resembling all kinds of monsters.

After drawing the curtains, Barton carefully examined the interior with the aid of the moonlight, and he confirmed that the interior was exactly the same as he remembered.

I really am too sensitive… An aftereffect of the nightmare yesterday? Barton exhaled and left the study quickly.

Behind him, the curtains that were drawn lightly swayed, as if a gust of wind was blowing.

The next day, Barton continued his daily routine.

He kissed his wife and children, took a rental carriage, read newspapers, brewed black tea, read letters…

Eh, *there's another letter from Vernal.* Barton felt relieved and opened the letter.

However, there was nothing in the letter. The sender seemed to have forgotten to stuff the letter into the envelope.

Has Vernal been suffering from absentmindedness recently? Barton glanced at the envelope in his hand and suddenly realized that the pattern on it was a little strange.

This was an envelope with a commemorative sense.

According to what Barton knew, many high-end hotels in Backlund and Stoen City would provide special envelopes and paper to their guests. It was equivalent to a tourist souvenir.

Which hotel is this? Barton put the envelope to his nose and prepared to smell the fragrance on it. It was also unique and recognizable.

In the next second, he smelled a faint scent of blood.

Chapter 1397: An Ordinary Person's Daily Life (3/8)

Instantly, Barton's hair stood on end.

Although he couldn't be sure that he smelled blood, his spiritual perception told him that this was the smell of blood.

Vernal encountered some misfortune? Just like the archaeological team that I was in back then? No, there's no blood on the envelope. How can it emit the smell of blood? After a brief, extreme fright, Barton stood up immediately.

As an ordinary person, he had only one reaction when facing such a situation.

That was to call the police!

As Barton took the envelope and left his seat, he suddenly remembered something.

There were clear rules of how to deal with such situations within the Loen Relic Search and Preservation Foundation. If a project were to produce a phenomenon that was terrifying or incomprehensible, employees were to immediately halt everything and report to the Compliance Department. They would be responsible for the follow-up.

Barton didn't understand why he needed to go to the Compliance Department. From what he knew, this was a department that handled provisions and audit projections for any violations of the rules. It had nothing to do with handling unknown dangers.

However, the founder of the foundation, Miss Audrey Hall, didn't make many changes during the internal auditing of the departments. She only added this one clause. Therefore, the higher-ups didn't wish to argue with her over this.

And obviously I'd prefer to meet the head of security… Barton muttered as he walked out of his office, heading straight for the Compliance Department at the end of the corridor.

Knock! Knock! Knock! He tried his best to compose himself and knocked on the door three times in a gentlemanly manner.

"Come on in." A voice without any uniqueness came from inside.

To be frank, Barton didn't know much about his colleagues at the Compliance Department. He only knew that they were cold and heartless. They acted quickly and easily caught any parasites within the foundation who tried to cheat the foundation for funding.

Taking a deep breath, Barton turned the doorknob and pushed open the door.

In his mind, the Compliance Department likely worked in an abnormally dark environment. Everyone maintained their silence and exchanged a few words from time to time, deciding the fate of a project and its principal investigator. However, the first thing that entered his eyes was bright sunlight, colorful decorations, and an open and bright setting.

"What's the matter?" A black-haired, brown-eyed employee with no special features from the Compliance Department greeted him.

He was wearing a thick black coat, which didn't seem to be able to withstand the cold winter weather in East Chester.

In addition, Barton sensed that the voice of this Compliance Department employee had a Backlund accent to it. Either he was born there, or he had stayed there for quite some time.

He isn't cold, mechanical, and difficult to get along with. He even feels friendly... As such thoughts flashed through Barton's mind, he said hurriedly, "A partner of ours seems to have encountered a situation!

"The letter he sent only consisted of an envelope. There's no content inside, and there's the smell of blood coming from it."

The employee from the Compliance Department didn't show any change in expression. He nodded and said, "Show me the envelope."

Barton passed Archaeologist Vernal's "letter."

Only then did he realize that he was being rude. He hurriedly asked, "I'm sorry; how should I address you?"

The employee from the Compliance Department raised the envelope and carefully looked at it against the sunlight. He then casually replied, "Pacheco Dwayne, deputy director of the Compliance Department, an experienced solicitor. Just call me Pacheco."

Without waiting for Barton's reply, Pacheco lowered his arm and said with a serious expression, "Indeed, there are some abnormalities.

"A preliminary conclusion is that this letter is from the Clough Hotel in the city. I once lived there for some time, and I know that they like to emboss Lavender Castle on their envelopes and paper."

"Do we need to call the police?" Barton blurted out.

Pacheco shook his head.

"Not for now. Let's go to the venue to confirm the situation.

"This requires your assistance. I don't know that partner."

"…Alright. I'll go with you." Barton hesitated.

After exiting the Loen Relic Search and Preservation Foundation and boarding a rental carriage, Barton found the silence rather awkward. He took the initiative to ask, "Pacheco, you're from Backlund?"

"No." Pacheco shook his head. "I'm from Midseashire. I just happen to have lived in Backlund for nearly fifteen years."

"Why did you leave Backlund? I heard that it's the city most suitable for lawyers to develop their career," Barton said casually.

Pacheco smiled and said, “But it’s also a place full of competition.

“Alright, I was just joking. I was once a personal lawyer and partner of Framis Cage, a steam car mogul. Later, he invested in the Backlund Bike Company, and I began to work as the company’s legal advisor.”

Barton was suddenly enlightened.

“Miss Audrey has a large number of shares in that company. Did you get to know her because of that?”

“That’s right.” Pacheco sighed. “In the war, Framis unfortunately passed away. His estate fell into dispute. As his friend, I helped his widow and children obtain quite a large share. As a result, I offended some people. This made my situation in Backlund become difficult. Fortunately, Miss Audrey extended an olive branch to me and invited me to East Chester County to work at the foundation as deputy director of the Compliance Department.”

With Pacheco telling him such matters, Barton felt a closer bond with him.

He was slightly puzzled and asked, “Why did they target you? You were just carrying out your duty as a friend and a lawyer.

“Those people should aim at the widow and children of Framis Cage.”

Pacheco laughed self-deprecatingly and said, “I used some inappropriate methods.

“Also, Framis has other friends to take care of his widow and children.”

As they chatted, the rental carriage arrived at the Clough Hotel in Stoen City.

The location of the hotel was rather good. The street was beautiful and quiet, and they only needed to walk for ten minutes to reach the most bustling streets in the city.

After entering the hotel and finding the boss, Pacheco asked directly, “We’ve come to find a friend named Vernal.”

Through their casual conversation, he had already grasped the general situation of the target.

The boss frowned in puzzlement.

“If I remember correctly, there shouldn’t be any customer here named Vernal.”

Barton quickly added, “He’s a little taller than me, and he looks very well-built. His nose is always very red, and his body often reeks of alcohol…”

He described the characteristics of Vernal in detail.

The boss recalled and looked at the attendant beside him.

“There’s a guest like that,” the attendant replied immediately. “He lives in Room 309.”

Under the attendant’s lead, Barton and Pacheco arrived outside the room and knocked on the door.

The knocking echoed, but there was no movement inside.

Just as Barton was about to suggest calling the police again, Pacheco suddenly bent down and picked up a white, soft tuft of hair from the crack at the bottom of the door.

No, it wasn’t hair. It resembled the condensation of fog.

With Pacheco’s fingers touching it, it spread out and merged into the air.

At the same time, Barton, whose spiritual perception was slightly different from ordinary people, vaguely heard a faint male voice:

“*Tamara… Tamara…*”

Chapter 1398: An Ordinary Person's Daily Life (4/8)

Tamara... Barton ruminated over the name and wondered what it meant.

He was no longer the same person who realized that he could hear sounds that others couldn't. He didn't look around in panic, hoping to find someone who was hiding and speaking in a dark corner. There were no signs of him constantly being prepared to grab a wooden pole and rushing over to strike the person. He stood on the spot calmly, observing the reaction of the deputy director of the Compliance Department, Pacheco.

Pacheco glanced at him and said, "Have you done any research in the history of the Fourth Epoch?"

"A little," Barton replied modestly.

At this moment, he didn't pretend that he didn't know anything about the history of the Fourth Epoch. Firstly, his character didn't allow for that. Secondly, his position was a direct result of his academic background in history. If he had any major flaws in this field, he might be fired by the foundation tomorrow.

Pacheco looked at the door and said, "Have you heard of the name Tamara before?"

"I've heard of it." Barton instinctively turned his head to glance at Pacheco. "In the little-known history of the Fourth Epoch, the name 'Tamara' has appeared several times, and its frequency is only second to Tudor, Solomon, and Trunsoest. From this, it can be determined that this represents a great noble of some empire in the Fourth Epoch.”

After saying this, Barton paused and said, “Vernal recently discovered some ruins from the Fourth Epoch.”

As the hotel waiter was by his side, he didn’t directly mention that the name “Tamara” might have something to do with the current abnormality Vernal was facing.

Pacheco didn’t respond. He turned to the hotel attendant and said, “I’m a police officer in charge of a criminal investigation. I suspect that the tenant in this room has encountered some misfortune. Please open the door immediately.”

As he spoke, he took out an identification document and showed it to the other party.

The hotel attendant was shocked and looked at the identification carefully.

“Okay, okay. I’ll get the keys!”

As he spoke, he turned around and ran towards the staircase.

“You’re a policeman?” Barton, who was watching from the sidelines, blurted out in shock.

Pacheco looked down at the identification in his hand and chuckled.

"This document is 100% real. It was obtained through legal channels."

Why do you need to make it sound so complicated… Barton habitually replied, "I don't care about its authenticity. I just want to know if you're a police officer."

Pacheco laughed.

"That depends on how you view it."

This answer left Barton rather irritated, but as a typical Loen gentleman, he knew that the other party was unwilling to give him an answer directly, so he politely shut his mouth.

Of course, one of the reasons included the other party being one of the deputy directors of the Compliance Department.

The two of them remained silent as the hotel owner and the attendant returned to the third floor.

After carefully inspecting the identification document in Pacheco's hands and matching it to the face, the hotel owner took out his keys and opened the door. He grumbled, "How did something happen? Nothing was heard."

If a high-end hotel was involved in a murder case, it would definitely affect their image and reputation. They might even go bankrupt.

"Don't worry too much. Perhaps it's just a small problem." Pacheco gave him some friendly consolation.

“I hope so. May the Goddess bless me.” The hotel owner retracted his hand and tapped his chest four times in a clockwise fashion, outlining the stars.

Then, he gently pushed the door open.

At that moment, the interior of the room seemed to connect to the outside world. A faint smell of blood filled the air.

“Oh…” The hotel owner noticed this and could only use an exclamation to express his disappointment and fear.

Only an environment like this can make the envelope not stained with blood have the smell of blood… This thought flashed through Barton’s mind immediately.

It was only then that he noticed that the furniture was neatly arranged in the room, and there were no obvious wrinkles on the carpet. It stood in contrast with the smell of blood.

It didn’t seem like there was a fight… A fatal shot? Barton’s hobbies included reading popular novels, especially those that mixed murder and love. Therefore, he had a rather rich “experience” in such situations.

And among all the best-selling authors, the one he loved the most was undoubtedly Fors Wall.

In the beginning, the one who bought Fors Wall’s few novels was his wife. Barton had once read through one of them and ended up being engrossed in it.

Of course, he wouldn't reveal this in front of his wife. He would always use an authoritative tone, saying, "These kinds of novels are shallow and worthless. They're only suitable for killing time."

Amidst Barton's thoughts, Pacheco put on a pair of white gloves and walked into the room.

After surveying the area, this experienced solicitor walked to the desk and picked up the stack of letters with the Lavender Castle pattern embossed on it. He said to the hotel owner and waiter, "Do you know how many pieces there were originally?"

"W-we d-don't replenish them e-every day." The attendant looked at his boss and stuttered.

What he was trying to say was that after having the guests living in this room rotate out a few times, he had no idea how many letters were left when Vernal moved in.

Pacheco scoffed and shook his head. He said to Barton, who was standing beside him, "That's why this world needs order and rules.

"If they used a set of strict rules, replenishing the number of letters to a set number every time a customer checks out, we could've used this to find some clues."

"I don't understand what you mean," Barton answered truthfully.

Pacheco smiled and said, "Simply put, only light can cause shadows.

“Of course, enough chaos also means an opportunity.”

Barton nodded and said, “Yes, Emperor Roselle once said that chaos is a staircase that leads one up.”

“No one knows if he’s the one who said that. There are too many people in this world who don’t dare to directly express their views, so they can only rely on the names of others,” Pacheco casually replied.

Then, he picked up the blank piece of paper at the top and held it against the sunlight that passed through the glass windows.

“I love dealing with people who are careless.” Pacheco suddenly laughed.

After saying this, he put the letter back in its original position.

The next second, he took out a sharpened pencil from his pocket and lightly scribbled it over the letter paper.

Before long, the traces of Loenese text appeared one after another, forming several scattered sentences:

“…I’ve been targeted…

“…The ruins have traces of some religious rituals…

“…I took away the items on the altar…

"…It… It saw me!

"…No! It's always been by my side!"

When he wrote these few sentences, the archaeologist, Vernal, seemed to be undergoing upheavals in his mood, so he had used plenty of force, leaving the most obvious of traces with his pen.

Chapter 1399: An Ordinary Person's Daily Life (5/8)

After seeing the marks on the paper, Pacheco turned his head and said to Barton, "What happens next will be quite complicated. I will seek the police's help.

"And you can return to the foundation and wait for further questioning."

Barton, who was staring at the paper, wasn't disappointed. Instead, he felt relieved, and he hurriedly nodded.

"Alright."

After reading the traces left behind by Vernal, Barton's intuition told him that the matter was very dangerous.

As an ordinary person, avoiding danger was an instinctive choice.

Of course, this was also because Vernal could only be considered one of his ordinary friends. It wasn't worth taking a huge risk and getting involved in this matter.

After answering, Barton turned around immediately and walked past the hotel owner and attendant and arrived at the street.

This time, he didn't choose to take public transport and instead boarded a rental carriage.

Barton's trip outside was considered as a special matter. It was rather urgent, and with the deputy director of the Compliance Department to testify for him, he could make a claim for the expenses incurred.

The difference between spending the foundation's money and using one's own salary was two completely different feelings.

On the way, Barton looked at the scenery outside the window and couldn't help but think about Vernal's current situation.

Is he still alive?

The room was filled with a strong stench of blood…

I hope he's still alive. May the Lord bless him.

If he's still alive, where will he be now?

Where…

Could it be?

There!

As his thoughts raced, Barton suddenly thought of a possibility. He quickly instructed the coach driver to change routes and head home.

Not long after, he returned home.

“What happened?” Barton’s wife approached him with a surprised look.

It was still quite some time before lunch, let alone getting off work.

Barton didn’t take off his hat or jacket. Without answering her question, he directly asked, “Was Vernal here?”

“He came to visit you fifteen minutes ago. I told him to wait in the study room and send Wells to the foundation to look for you,” Barton’s wife replied honestly.

Wells was their family’s valet. And clearly, fifteen minutes wasn’t enough for him to reach the Loen Relic Search and Preservation Foundation.

This was what puzzled Barton’s wife the most.

“Right.” Barton nodded heavily. He hurriedly passed through the living room, went up to the second floor, and entered the study.

In the study room, the windows were wide open and the curtains were slightly rolled. There was no one there.

“Vernal?” Barton shouted, but there was no answer.

He jumped out of the window and left… Barton frowned. He looked around seriously and discovered that the books on the bookshelf were in a mess.

It was a set of historical books that were split into three-parter volumes.

Barton's habit was to arrange them from right to left, and now it was going from left to right.

He took a deep breath and quickly walked over to retrieve the three books.

After a thorough examination, Barton found that a page in the middle had been folded.

He quickly flipped to that page and opened a corner.

Scribbled there simply with a pencil were the words:

"The refugees of the Fourth Epoch worshiped an evil god."

Man… Barton panicked and turned horrified. He stuffed the book back.

Without much thought, he ran out of the study and towards the stairs, preparing to find the deputy director of the Compliance Department, Pacheco. He wanted to tell him about his discovery and get him to request the police to protect his family.

After exiting the house, Barton slowed down and considered an important question:

Where do I go to find Pacheco?

The Clough Hotel, the Stoen police headquarters, or the foundation?

After a brief moment of thought, Barton decided to return to the foundation and look for other employees of the Compliance Department.

At that moment, a rental carriage stopped outside his door as Pacheco Dwayne alighted.

“We discovered that Vernal came to your house again,” the deputy director of the Compliance Department explained quickly.

Barton heaved a sigh of relief and replied without hesitation, “Yes, but he has already left.

“However, he left some clues behind.”

After saying this, Barton led Pacheco into his own house, went to his study, and handed him the book.

Pacheco looked at it for a while, then gently slid his finger across the surface of the text.

Right on the heels of that, he took out the pencil he had used previously and wrote beside Vernal’s comment.

“Call the police!”

After doing all of this, Pacheco stuffed the book back to its original position.

However, he didn't push the book in completely.

This way, the entire row of books had one book bulging out.

“Alright, let's return to the foundation and have lunch. We'll wait for the good news from the police.” Pacheco clapped his hands.

Barton didn't understand the reason behind this senior lawyer's actions, but he didn't ask why.

He really didn't want to get involved in this matter. He felt that he couldn't bear it at all.

Barton then fabricated a few reasons to his wife before returning to the foundation with Pacheco to begin his daily work.

When it was tea time, he had just finished an ancient book's appraisal when he heard someone knocking on the door.

“We've got some clues. We need to go to your place,” said Pacheco, who was wrapped in a gray scarf and standing by the door.

“Clues?” Barton rose in surprise.

Pacheco didn't give a direct answer. He spread out his hands and made an inviting gesture.

Barton couldn't refuse and went home with the other party.

"Vernal came again!" His wife clearly sensed that something was amiss and went to the door in horror.

"It's fine. Just some minor problems." Barton maintained his image as a man and consoled his wife.

When he arrived at the study, he and Pacheco discovered that, yet again, Vernal had escaped.

"Damn it, can't he just wait for a while?" Barton couldn't help but grumble.

"It's alright." Pacheco walked up to the bookshelf and pulled out the book.

Clearly, Vernal had read his suggestion, as the book was completely stuffed into the bookshelf.

"I guess I know where Vernal is." Pacheco closed his eyes, smiling.

Barton was stunned.

"How do you know?"

Pacheco opened his eyes and replied with a smile, "He accepted my bribe—no, a gift. But that isn't right either. The most accurate description should be a suggestion.

“Of course, he might not accept it.”

With that said, the deputy director of the Compliance Department walked past Barton and out of the study.

Barton followed behind him subconsciously, leaving his own borough and turning into a nearby street.

At the end of the street, there was a house that had collapsed due to a fire.

“They actually haven’t started reconstruction efforts,” Barton whispered.

Pacheco put on a pair of white gloves again, and his expression became a little stern.

Through the rather intact main door, he entered the half-collapsed hall.

Black pieces of wood were strewn across the ground, blocking the lower half of a person’s body.

The figure was wearing a brown jacket with a red nose. He looked very stocky and was none other than the archaeologist, Vernal.

Barton secretly exhaled and asked anxiously, “Why didn’t you call the police?”

“They’re monitoring the police station,” Vernal replied without a change in expression.

Barton blurted out, “Why didn’t you leave Stoen and go to other cities to report to the police?”

“They’re monitoring the steam locomotive station,” Vernal replied in the same tone.

Barton thought for a moment and frowned.

“You have many ways to leave Stoen. They can’t seal off a city.”

Upon hearing this question, Vernal’s expression gradually changed as he said with a slightly ethereal tone, “I sensed the will of that great existence…”

Chapter 1400: An Ordinary Person's Daily Life (6/8)

Great existence… As soon as Barton heard Vernal, certain memories hidden deep within his heart surged out.

This made it difficult for him to contain his fear. His feet unconsciously took a few steps back.

In that the archaeological expedition many years ago, all the nightmares had started with similar descriptions!

Just as Barton's body trembled and was about to turn around and run away, the deputy director of the Compliance Department, Pacheco Dwayne, brought up a question:

"Since you've already sensed the will of that great existence, why didn't you reconcile with the Fourth Epoch refugees who are pursuing you?"

Vernal's breathing suddenly became heavier, as if a faint white fog had spewed out.

His voice also became louder.

"Their faith wasn't accepted with their whole body and mind. They still had some reservations!"

As Vernal spoke, a faint white fog spread out from the half-collapsed house, emitting a strong smell of blood.

Barton seemed to come to a realization, but he wasn't in the mood to think.

He only wanted to leave this place and escape the danger that was about to erupt.

However, Pacheco was rather calm. He looked at Vernal and asked warmly, "You've been visiting Mr. Barton all this while, and writing letters to the foundation. What kind of help do you want us to provide?"

Upon hearing this, Barton was taken aback.

If it were another occasion, he would definitely imagine that Pacheco was asking what kind of legal advice Vernal needed!

At a time like this, didn't he only have two options? He could either escape and report this to the police, or take out his weapon and fire a bullet at Vernal or smack him in the head with a pole... Barton was full of doubts about Pacheco's way of handling things.

With faint white fog lingering at the tip of his nose, and with his eyes that were glowing with gray light, Vernal didn't show any resistance to this kind of exchange. His expression became solemn as he replied in a dignified tone, "Two things:

"First, bring this item to the suburbs and return in the evening."

While speaking, Vernal threw a glass bottle with a slender neck.

The glass bottle seemed to be very sturdy. Even when it fell to the ground, it didn't seem damaged at all despite hitting a rock.

Its interior was filled with pale white, thin, almost illusory fog.

At that moment, Barton acutely sensed that the body of this deputy director of the Compliance Department had stiffened a little, as though he had sensed something unusual.

Vernal didn't observe their reactions and continued, "Secondly, when you are searching for ancient artifacts, help me find similar items."

As he spoke, he took out a piece of paper and spread it open.

There was a strange-looking lamp on the paper. It was like a tiny water flask that had a candlewick extend out of its mouth.

"...No problem." After two seconds of silence, Pacheco replied in a low voice, one different from his previous tone.

"That's good. Haha, don't you think that our encounter was a coincidence?" Then Vernal tossed the piece of paper aside and leaped up high onto the half-collapsed building.

He was like a baboon as he nimbly climbed up and jumped, quickly disappearing from Barton's and Pacheco's sights.

"What are we going to do next..." Barton turned to look at the deputy director of the Compliance Department.

Before he could finish speaking, he suddenly stopped. He realized that Pacheco was still standing there, breathing heavily.

In addition to that, Pacheco's body was covered with thick black fur. His muscles swelled up, causing the black coat to tighten.

... *Monster... Monster...* Barton's eyes widened as if he wanted to see clearly Pacheco's current appearance.

In the blink of an eye, the abnormality on Pacheco vanished. He let out a long breath and said, "We'll wait here."

"...Do you need to pick them up?" Barton pointed at the bottle and paper on the ground.

The corners of Pacheco's mouth twitched as he said, "You can pick it up.

"But you have to keep a distance from me later."

Barton blurted out, "Will the fog in that glass bottle affect you?"

"There are things that even if you can't be certain about, it's best to not rashly attempt them." Pacheco still didn't give a direct answer.

It's really tiring to communicate with him... After pondering for a while, Barton took a few steps forward and stopped in front of the bottle and paper.

Just as he bent down to grab the two items, his eyes suddenly lit up with a weak light.

Immediately after, a pair of boots appeared before his eyes.

The front of one of the boots was curled up high. The other was similar to the rounded-top boots that were popular nowadays, as though they belonged to two different people.

Barton's heart tightened. He suddenly straightened his body and looked forward.

There was a lady standing opposite him.

This lady was wearing clothes that could be considered as two dresses. One side was complex, and the other was simple. One side was colorful, and the other side pure black.

This asymmetrical attire made Barton flare up instinctively. He wanted to tear off her clothes and give her a normal dress and a pair of normal boots.

This impulsiveness didn't contain any trace of a male's desire to harm women. It was purely because of his disgust and repugnant feeling towards such a sense of aesthetics.

After enduring the discomfort, Barton cast his gaze at the lady's head.

She had a pretty face, a high nose bridge, full lips, and a pair of dark gray eyes that were rarely seen. She looked to be in her twenties.

Barton didn't feel any amazement. Instead, he felt that the lady's appearance was rather strange.

After a few seconds, he finally understood the reason.

The lady's face was devoid of expression, unlike a real person. It was closer to a wax statue.

"Vernal has already left." The deputy director of the Compliance Department, Pacheco, seemed to have completely recovered and took the initiative to speak.

The lady's gaze swept across the bottle and paper in Barton's hand.

"What does he want you to do?"

"Bring this bottle to the suburbs and return only in the evening. Also, we are to help him find the item drawn on the paper," Pacheco answered frankly, putting on an attitude as though he was unwilling to be the lady's enemy.

The lady nodded and said, "Give me the bottle."

As soon as she finished speaking, Barton seemed to have heard an order that couldn't be disobeyed. He instinctively threw the thin-necked bottle in his hand at the other party.

Pacheco seized this opportunity and asked, "You're a member of the Tamara family?"

The lady caught the bottle and looked down.

"I didn't expect anyone to remember us."

Pacheco replied with a smile, “In truth, from the end of the Fourth Epoch until now, there have always been active members of the Tamara family, but there are very few of them.

“Have you heard of the Theosophy Order?”

“They are them. We are us,” the lady answered simply before her body rapidly faded away and vanished.

Chapter 1401: An Ordinary Person's Daily Life (7/8)

After seeing the lady disappear for a few seconds, Pacheco turned his head and said to Barton, “Let’s go back to the foundation.”

“Aren’t we going to the suburbs?” Barton asked subconsciously.

Pacheco said with a smile, “Didn’t you already give the bottle away?

“We no longer have a reason to go to the suburbs.

“Perhaps his true aim was for us to hand the bottle to the lady of the Tamara family. What he said before were all lies.

“Of course, this has nothing to do with us. Next, there is no innocent party among them, so it doesn’t matter who dies. All we need to do is perform a certain amount of surveillance to prevent their battle from affecting ordinary people. This will be handled by the police, not by the foundation or the Compliance Department.”

Vernal doesn’t look like he’s capable of this kind of devious plot... Barton mumbled. He didn’t ask further and turned to walk out the door.

Frankly speaking, returning to the foundation was the answer he wanted to hear the most.

It was just a spur of the moment when he asked if they were heading to the suburbs. It was an old habit he hadn't overcome for many years.

After returning to the foundation, Barton spent the rest of the day feeling rather uneasy. He went through the menial, repetitive routine until evening came.

I originally felt that life was too boring, but I now realize that a monotonous life is so precious. Sigh, I only hope that nothing unexpected happens like in the afternoon… May the Lord bless me… Barton stopped at his doorstep, stretched out his right hand, clenched his fist, and gently struck his left chest.

After finishing his prayer, he opened the door and entered. He took off his hat, coat, and handed them over to his wife who had come forward.

"What happened to Vernal?" his wife asked carefully.

Barton replied calmly in both tone and expression, "He offended some people and was being followed. The police have taken over this matter.

"In the future, if Vernal visits again, don't let him in. Remember to send someone to inform the police."

Barton's wife heaved a sigh of relief when she heard that the police had intervened.

After dinner, Barton played with his children for a while before finding an excuse to go to his study and sit near the window.

He needed a private space to completely calm his emotions and walk out of the panic brought about by the incident with Vernal.

As such, Barton took out a cigarette from his drawer and put it to his mouth.

He wasn't addicted to smoking, but he had to socialize sometimes, so he prepared a pack of cigarettes at home and on his body.

He lit the matchstick, lit the cigarette, and took a deep suck.

He then leaned back in his chair and watched the smoke coming out from his mouth and nose.

The white gas quickly spread out in all directions, making Barton suddenly think of the fog coming out of Vernal's mouth and nose.

He vaguely smelled the faint scent of blood.

To Barton, this wasn't a very strange discovery. After all, Vernal had stayed in his study before, so he definitely left some traces behind. Ordinary people wouldn't be able to detect him.

Barton didn't smell it before, but because he was too nervous and flustered, his attention had been focused on the whereabouts of Vernal and the words he had left behind.

Of course, the smell of blood in the study room was very faint. It was also one of the reasons why it couldn't compare with the hotel room and the burnt ruins at all.

As the smoke from the cigarette spread, Barton suddenly narrowed his eyes.

He had an ominous feeling!

In an instant, the pale white gas shrank in a certain direction with the smell of blood, forming a figure.

The figure's upper body was normal with an iconic red nose. It was none other than the archaeologist, Vernal.

The lower half of his body was completely shrouded in air, like a monster drawn out by smoke.

"V-Vernal…" Barton shouted, almost suffocating.

His voice reverberated in the study, unable to penetrate the wall.

"Haha, I've already acquired an immortal body. As long as there's still some fog left, I'll be able to come back to life!" Vernal burst into laughter.

Compared to before, his expression became more and more crazed, and his eyes seemed to be slightly palish-white.

H-he was already dead just now? This thought subconsciously flashed across Barton's mind.

Then, he forced himself to remain calm and said, "What's the matter?"

As he spoke, Barton wanted to stand up on impulse, but sadly he discovered that his body was covered by a cold and thin fog, and he had lost most of his senses.

Vernal stopped laughing and looked into Barton’s eyes. He said word by word, “You didn’t bring that bottle to the suburbs.”

Although Barton had a rash personality, he knew that he couldn’t answer this question directly. He quickly thought of a solution.

A few seconds later, he changed the topic before he spoke again.

“Why did you convert to believing in that entity?

“Aren’t you a loyal believer of the Lord?”

Vernal fell silent for a moment before his expression gradually became fervent.

“I’ve seen an even larger world, a much more vast world.

“Compared to that, the planet we are currently living on is like a grain of sand in the desert.

“There are innumerable civilizations, ancient ruins left behind from hundreds of thousands of years, millions of years, or even tens of millions of years ago.

“This is what the universe looks like!”

Seeing that his question only made things worse, Barton fell silent. He thought about whether there were any non-sensitive topics that would garner Vernal's interest.

He slowly took a deep breath and said, "Other than the altar, what else did you discover at the Fourth Epoch ruin?

"How much do you know of the Tamara family?"

"The Tamara family had its coat of arms replaced once.

"This means that they had encountered something rather major."

As he spoke, the archaeologist who was just an upper half of a body had extended his right hand. Using the smoke, he drew out two symbols in midair.

The first symbol was formed from a layer of brambles, a shield wall, and a longsword that was vertically inserted into them from above. The main part of the second symbol was a pair of double doors that swung open, and the gap in the middle was taken up by the vertical longsword.

As a barely famous historian, Barton immediately thought of the words of the Tamara family member:

"They are them. We are us."

"Did the Tamara family fracture?" Barton blurted out.

“I thought so,” said Vernal, smiling with gratification. Then he leaned close to Barton, his face burning with zeal. “Your brain is more tempting than I imagined, and it’s the best supplement for me. Relax a little. Your mind will merge with mine, and we can witness those great civilizations together.”

He looked very weak and eager to recover.

Barton’s heart thumped wildly, and he tried his best to avoid the other party. But no matter how hard he struggled, his body seemed to freeze. He was unable to move at all.

Just as he was about to close his eyes, Barton suddenly felt a sharp pain in his right hand, and he immediately regained consciousness.

The pale white fog in front of him and the monster-like Vernal disappeared as if they had never appeared.

Barton lowered his head numbly and saw that the cigarette in his right hand had reached its limit, burning his fingers.

It was a dream? But I found it so realistic. Barton threw away the cigarette in his hand and instinctively stood up using his spirituality and walked to the window.

He looked out at the streets and saw that under the street lamps, many pedestrians were passing by in the darkness, wanting to rush home as soon as possible.

Among them, an ordinary golden retriever was taking a casual stroll.

Chapter 1402: An Ordinary Person's Daily Life (8/8)

The scene in front of him was so ordinary that Barton didn't feel that there was anything wrong with it.

Although he vaguely felt that there was something familiar about it, he didn't think that it was worth puzzling over it.

How could a daily scene not be familiar?

His gaze shifted as he looked up into the sky. He saw the crimson moon quietly hanging in the sky, shining with light, causing his mood to settle down involuntarily.

At that moment, Barton seemed to have let go of an invisible burden. His body and mind were unusually relaxed. He no longer had the same fear, anxiety, and frustration from before.

His spiritual intuition told him that Vernal's matter had come to an end, and it would no longer affect his life.

“Holy Lord of Storms. Lord, thank you for your blessings.” Barton immediately struck his left chest with his right fist and muttered to himself.

Without anxiety and tension, he felt exhaustion overwhelm him like a flood. It surged from the depths of his soul, drowning his brain, limbs, and every cell in his body.

Barton couldn’t help but use the back of his hand to cover his mouth. He yawned, but a satisfied smile appeared on his face.

He didn’t stay in the study any longer and turned around to leave. He returned to the bedroom and took a pleasant bath, enjoying himself as he drank a small glass of red wine.

That night, Barton didn’t dream anymore and slept exceptionally soundly.

When he woke up in the morning, his mind was relaxed and his spirits were rising. It was as if he had obtained a new life.

Looking at his wife who was still sleeping beside him, Barton carefully got up, changed his clothes, and walked around the neighborhood.

He had never realized how wonderful his district was.

The air was fresh, the environment was peaceful, and the scenery was pleasant. Even the pedestrians were cultured.

This made Barton’s mood even better. Once again, he deeply understood that the matter with Vernal had come to an end, and he had returned to his normal, peaceful life.

He maintained his mood and went home to enjoy breakfast with his wife and children.

During this process, he even told his wife about a joke he read in the newspapers and fulfilled his children’s tiny requests.

Seeing the smiles on his wife and children's faces, Barton felt satisfied.

Then, he put on his coat, hat, and cane before heading out to take a trackless public carriage. He walked all the way to the Loen Relic Search and Preservation Foundation at the periphery of the city.

After entering his office, Barton found his usual daily pace. He didn't get right down to work but prepared the special herbal black tea he had prepared himself.

With the black tea, he leisurely read the newspapers that he didn't subscribe to at home. Then, he picked up the letters and documents he had received and read them.

Such a process and pace made him feel exceptionally comfortable.

The only difference was that Barton was still a little worried about receiving yet another letter from Vernal.

However, this concern didn't turn into a reality.

About fifteen minutes later, someone knocked on his office door.

"Please come in." Barton picked up his cup and took a sip of his black tea.

The person who entered was the ordinary-looking deputy director of the Compliance Department, Pacheco Dwayne, who didn't have any characteristics that stood out but still managed to give off a warm and friendly vibe.

“Did you sleep well last night?” asked Pacheco as he stood at the door.

“Excellent.” Baton didn’t hide anything.

Pacheco nodded and smiled.

“Seems like you’ve really gotten rid of the effects from this matter.”

Barton didn’t mention the “nightmare” he had had. Instead, he asked, “What about you?”

“I also slept very well,” Pacheco replied with a smile. “The police have already taken over this matter. It’s said that they found Vernal last night. Unfortunately, he apparently encountered some misfortune.”

“Poor soul, I hope he can rest in peace.” Barton didn’t pray that the Lord would protect him, because Vernal had already abandoned his faith in the Lord of Storms. If there were really any blessings to be bestowed, then it would definitely be lightning blasts and storms.

With that said, he thought of the help that Pacheco had provided and his friendly attitude. He said, “Shall we have lunch together later?”

“Are you treating?” asked Pacheco with a smile.

“Of course. It’s a pleasure to meet a friend like you.” Barton stood up and bowed gentlemanly.

Pacheco nodded slightly and said, “Then I’ll wait at the Compliance Department for your invitation.

“Before 12?”

“No problem.” Apart from being grateful to him, Barton also felt that knowing the deputy director of the Compliance Department would be a great help to his future work.

Furthermore, he believed that Pucheco was just like him. In some aspects, he was stronger than the average person.

After seeing Pacheco leave his office, Barton sat down again, silently and slowly exhaling.

As an ordinary person with a normal IQ, he could tell that the matters regarding Vernal were very strange. It involved the problems of mysticism and religion.

In addition, he was actually very interested in the details of the Tamara family’s fracturing and the secret history of the Fourth Epoch, and the details to which Vernal had encountered.

However, he knew that he couldn’t probe further. It was thanks to the great luck of an ordinary person for him to be able to see the tip of the iceberg without dying. If he wanted to figure out the situation beneath the water surface, he would definitely drown to death.

The past archaeological expedition made Barton not dare to take the risk, nor did he want to take any risks.

To him, curiosity was probably the most worthless thing.

After pondering for a while, Barton continued his work.

When it was almost noon, he tidied the items on the table and picked up the coat and top hat hanging on the clothes rack. He left the office and walked to the door of the Compliance Department.

Knock! Knock! Knock! Barton knocked on the wooden door in front of him.

Soon, Pacheco opened the door and glanced at Barton.

“Give me another five minutes. I still have some matters to settle.”

“No problem.” Barton didn’t mind at all.

“Come on in and wait,” Pacheco said casually.

Barton didn’t stand on ceremony. He walked into the Compliance Department and found a chair to sit down.

As his gaze moved, he realized that there were about six to seven members in the Compliance Department.

Just then, he heard someone knocking on the door.

Without waiting for the employees of the Compliance Department to get up, the door creaked open.

The first to enter was the vice president of the Loen Relic Search and Preservation Foundation.

He was a lively old man. He looked around and paused for a second before saying, “Seems like everyone is here.

“Let me introduce you to a new colleague.”

As he spoke, the vice-president took a few steps forward, revealing the new employee of the Compliance Department behind him.

She was a woman in her twenties. She had a high nose bridge and a pair of moist, full lips. Her eyes were dark gray and her face was pretty. She wore a common blue dress.

However, there was no expression on her face. She didn’t look like a real person. She looked more like a wax statue.

The gazes of Barton and Pacheco froze.

The vice president continued smiling and said, “She will be like Pacheco, taking on the role of the deputy director of the Compliance Department. Her name is Alicia Tamara.”

Author’s Note:

There’s no way to go in-depth in the end to “An Ordinary Person’s Daily Life.” This is just a showcase of the tip of the iceberg without going deep. Yes, it’s also an experimental form of narrating the story.

If the ending is meant to have the effect of horror without any consideration of values, then it will be written as such:

As he spoke, the vice-president took a few steps forward, revealing the new employee of the Compliance Department behind him.

She was a woman in her twenties. She had a high nose bridge and a pair of moist, full lips. Her eyes were dark gray and her face was pretty. She wore a common blue dress.

The gazes of Barton and Pacheco froze.

At that moment, the lady’s lips curled up as she said with a radiant smile, “Hello everyone. I’m Alicia Tamara.”

Chapter 1403: In Modern Day (1)

I'm an ordinary company employee. My greatest joy every day is that I can clock off on time.

This isn't something that can be realized often, because it's only from working overtime that I can receive a higher salary. Only from doing so can I gain a little sense of security.

In this aspect, my boss isn't that bad. At the very least, he'll pay for overtime, unlike the company next door who only knows how to shout slogans. All they do is pump up the employees without sparing a single penny.

Based on my observations, they aren't far from closing down, because their boss is already trying to sell off second-hand computers on his WeChat Moments.

This isn't something I discovered. I'm not friends with their boss on WeChat. This comes from the mouths of the employees.

In this world, it's sexist to say that there's gossip where there are women present. Instead, there's gossip wherever there are people.

Of course, I don't have absolute confidence in those words. There was once a time when a dog and a cat made me feel that they were watching us humans with amusement and gossiping.

Just like now, the golden retriever that always appears near my office building is sitting at the entrance.

Seriously, looking at the grooming of its fur, it doesn't look like it doesn't have a master. How can someone walk a dog without a leash? This kind of person shouldn't be rearing pets. They have no morals at all! Eh, there's a necklace around its neck, a rope, and the end of the rope is in its mouth… As I mumble, I recall of an emoticon that has been trending online:

It has strong self-control!

I snort and cast my eyes beyond the glass doors. The sky is so dark, and large beads of raindrops pummel through the stuffy humid environment and crash into the ground.

*F*ck, it rained so quickly!* At this moment, I want to question God.

It hadn't been easy for me to get off work on time today. To think that I would encounter a storm; furthermore, I didn't bring an umbrella with me!

Back when I was in the office, I noticed that it was dark and gloomy outside and knew that a storm was coming, but I thought I had enough time to get to the bus stop.

By the time my bus arrives close to my rented apartment, the rain should've stopped or be reduced to a drizzle. After all, it's summer and the rain comes and goes quickly.

I can't help but raise my middle finger at God. Helpless, I turn my head to look at the golden retriever by the door and casually say, "You didn't bring an umbrella as well?"

That was just a self-deprecating comment of mine, but the next moment I’m shocked.

The big golden retriever rolls its eyes at me.

It rolled its eyes at me.

Its eyes.

I knew it. This dog has some humanity in it! I look away and mutter.

I examine the storm outside again, wondering if I should just run to the bus stop.

I sniff and, considering how I haven’t recovered fully from my cold, I hold back the urge.

Sigh, as a grown man, isn’t it normal to only bring a phone, a transportation card, and a key access card?

Who would carry a bag and have an umbrella inside for no reason?

These days, I don’t even keep change on me.

Forget it. I’ll just go back to the office and kill time. I’ll browse through websites and wait until the rain becomes a drizzle before I leave. If it really doesn’t pan out as I expect, then I’ll order takeout… I sigh and turn to walk to the elevator.

Suddenly, I notice an additional vending machine in one corner of the building lobby.

Somein Coffee? I suddenly feel like drinking something.

I did as I thought. With the financial freedom to buy beverages below 10 yuan, I confidently walk over to the vending machine and take a gander at the beverages on sale.

Mizone, *Nongfu Spring*, *Master Kong ice tea*, *and Jasmine tea… Eh…* I notice something strange when I look through the beverages on display.

It's a box, placed in the corner of the topmost row of beverages.

What the hell? I glance at the screen and read the scrolling images and text.

Soon, I understand what the box is.

It's the recently popular real-life "loot box!"

There are loot boxes even with beverages these days? It really is a tax on one's intelligence… Gambling is indeed exciting… I mutter as I scan what possible contents might be in the loot box.

*D*mn, this is interesting.*

This loot box is actually related to a new beverage product. It has never appeared on the market before, the bottle has a unique design, and the names are very stylish!

Seer, *Apprentice*, *Bard*, *Warrior*, *Sleepless—Ha*, *I like that. There's also Lawyer*, *Assassin*, *Hunter…* I glance at the price of the loot box and realize that it only costs 5 yuan.

It's cheaper than I expected, so I decide to give it a try.

Life is short, so why not give it a try?

As a slave of society, the daily working hours go from nine to six, seven, eight, nine, ten… Excluding work time, eating, sleeping, and commuting, there's very little free time for leisure.

Even the monotonous life would get to robots with this happening day after day. It's just so boring.

The property prices are even more depressing. They make you lose the motivation to work hard. One becomes dejected or just takes on a mantra of letting things come as they may.

To be able to find a new thrill in cheap forms of entertainment other than novels, comics, videos, and games can be considered a surprise.

Taking my phone out, I start scanning the QR code.

At the same time, I mutter a few names in my mind:

Seer, *Sleepless*, *Spectator*, *Assassin…*

These are the beverages that I hope for the most from the loot box.

I will be satisfied as long as it's one of them.

After paying, the vending machine seemed to be stuck. It didn't move for quite a while.

I suspect that it's trying to cheat me.

Is it packaging it on the spot? I complain as I seriously consider making a complaint.

At this moment, the vending machine finally showed signs of movement. The loot box is pushed out and falls to the dispenser with a thud.

It's time to witness a miracle! I bend down and push open the sliding panel of the dispenser and pull out the loot box that I really can't consider exquisitely packaged.

After I quickly open the box, I see a bottle wrapped in coiled snakes.

Based on what I saw on the screen, I'm able to recognize which drink it is.

As an Assassin's Creed gamer, this is an outcome I've been looking forward to:

Assassin!

Chapter 1404: In Modern Day (2)

Nice!

I can't help but snap my fingers with my free hand.

As someone who has never even won a consolation prize, to be able to get a beverage I wanted is simply exciting.

Furthermore, the most important thing is that I only spent five yuan. Otherwise, I'll definitely hit it trying it ten times in a row.

I need to keep this bottle well! I put away my phone, open the can, and take a mouthful of the beverage.

In the next second, my head suddenly turns a little numb. I feel like everything around me has become abnormally blurry, and my entire body becomes light as though I'm about to turn into a feather.

In this strange feeling, I vaguely hear muffled ravings that sound like fingernails scratching a blackboard:

"The taste of a Demoness ain't bad..."

"The taste of a Demoness ain't bad..."

"The taste of a Demoness ain't bad..."

This brings an indescribable pain, and I lose all my ability to think.

By the time the torture ends, I can't remember what happened towards the end, but I know that my face must have been very twisted and hideous.

*F*ck. What the hell is this beverage?* I turn angrily to look at the vending machine.

At that moment, my head is spinning, and my eyes swell. I have the feeling that I'll collapse at any moment.

However, this doesn't stop me from discovering a fact:

The vending machine that still existed moments ago has disappeared!

… *Holy sh*t…* I can't take my spinning head and the soreness in my eyes. I quickly remove my glasses and prepare to squeeze my nose bridge.

However, just as I take off my glasses, everything returns to normal. My head doesn't spin and my eyes no longer ache.

My vision remains clear, clearer than even before my myopia.

…I scan my surroundings, and every detail is reflected in my eyes. Even a dozen meters away, a mosquito silently suspended on a black stone is vividly clear.

I've recovered from my short-sightedness? That bout of fainting was because of the glasses? I glance around once more, and for some reason, I feel that my vision has exceeded that of a normal person's.

As I try hard to recall, I gradually come to a realization:

I can change part of my body's structure for a short amount of time. I can obtain feather-like lightness. Even if I jump from high above, I won't be hurt...

A hawk-like vision that allows me to see through the darkness...

I'm good at hiding in the shadows...

My steps are nimble and my body is agile. The instantaneous strength I can release is tremendous...

I can concentrate all my strength into a single strike...

This... As I suspect that the Assassin beverage that I had just taken was actually some mental drug that gives me hallucinations, I also feel that something might have really happened due to my recovery from short-sightedness.

I put on my glasses again and realize that it does leave me faint.

No way this is real... The vending machine is gone... It was still there a moment ago... Did I have a fortuitous encounter? I cast my gaze out of the lobby and see people carrying umbrellas or have their backpacks raised in the heavy rain, running about in a hurry.

Before this, I could only barely see silhouettes in this scene, but now, I can confirm the features of every pedestrian.

Of course, the prerequisite is that they aren't wearing face masks.

A fortuitous encounter… Don't tell me it's really a fortuitous encounter… I would occasionally fantasize about having a fortuitous encounter, for example, striking lottery worth 10–20 million yuan, but I never expected such a day!

Moreover, it's the Assassin ability that I wanted the most!

Even if it's fake, just healing my short-sightedness makes me give this fortuitous encounter full marks! I control my excitement and joy and carefully examine my body.

After confirming that there's nothing wrong with it, I close my eyes and mutter to myself, *Thank you*, *God!*

Thank you, *vending machine!*

Thank you, *loot box!*

I have to find a place to test the Leap of Faith… Eh, I've recovered from my cold too… I'll think further about it after the rain stops… I look around again, eager to test what it means to have dexterous steps, agility, and explosive power.

Of course, as a normal person with regular intelligence, I know that I should avoid others in times like this, lest I expose my fortuitous encounter and create a series of unknown developments.

At this moment, due to the heavy rain, the people inside the building either have to work overtime or have already left. Those without umbrellas either have realized the reality of things or haven't left the office. They either return to the office or bravely run to the bus stop. Therefore, other than the two security guards who have their backs to me, there's no one else in the lobby.

I can give it a try. Yes, there's a dog… Heh, so what if I'm seen by a dog? It doesn't understand anything. Would it be able to tell anyone? I immediately widen my pace and run toward the elevator.

I can feel the changes in my body.

Using a machine as an analogy, my body used to be a rusted machine that had been soaked in water. Now, it was a new, lubricated machine.

A few steps later, I suddenly remember something: Previously, several companies in the building had been a victim of theft. Through the surveillance cameras, the police found the criminal.

In other words, there are surveillance cameras in the lobby, and my every move is being monitored.

Bear with it, bear with it… I stop my attempts and turn back to look at the spots where there might be cameras.

My gaze sweeps across the huge golden retriever at the door. It's still impassively looking at the rain outside.

I'll wait till I get home… I let out a slow sigh, hold my glasses, and head for the elevator.

I heard from my gossiping colleagues at the company that the theft was done by a young rag-and-bone man from nearby.

In the past, this guy was the son of a rich man. Later on, his family waned, and he could only make a living being a rag-and-bone man.

However, the police never found him.

I take the elevator and go back to the tenth floor. My mind is filled with how to be an assassin hiding in the city's shadows.

Nothing is true, *everything is permitted!* I mutter a few slogans and exit the elevator.

Glancing around, I see a figure standing by the window at the elevator lobby.

He has rare, long silver hair. His features are very distinctive.

So I recognize him. He's the vice president of the company next door, whose surname is Wu.

Of course, this might only be his Chinese surname, because he's either a foreigner or a mixed-blood.

It's such a pity that this guy isn't an idol. He's so good-looking that even the girls in our company often try to "coincidentally" *bump into him. They give him flowers and food. It's like he has everything easy in the game of life... The boss next door really has bad taste. With such an employee, I'd have long changed to running an entertainment company... I don't know what the company next door is busy with every day. Until today, I don't even know what they do. All of them are garrulous, completely unlike Rozanne when she's joking. They're probably doing multi-level marketing, right?* I quickly retract my gaze and not greet him. After all, we're not familiar with each other.

But just at this moment, I see that guy turn around and walk over.

Chapter 1405: In Modern Day (3)

Under normal circumstances, I wouldn't be nervous if the vice-president from next door came to me. After all, I'm not under his jurisdiction.

And I'm not a girl either. My sexual orientation is very normal. No matter how good he looks, it has nothing to do with me. I'm even a little jealous.

But now, I've just drunk a bottle of some strange beverage of unknown origins and obtained the abilities of an Assassin I've been dreaming of. No matter who comes near me, I can't help but feel uneasy, afraid that others might discover my secret.

At this moment, the silver-haired guy stops in front of me and says coldly, "Do you have a lighter?"

Uh... This isn't an attitude a person should have when asking someone for help. Why are you looking at someone like you're looking at an object?

Also, the greatest hobby of youngsters nowadays is to stay up late instead of smoking. Why would I bring a lighter with me?

"No." I shake my head.

At the same time, I sigh inwardly.

If the female colleagues in my company find out that the handsome vice-president next door smokes, they would definitely have their fantasies crushed. This vice-president's appearance and temperament easily makes one believe he's some untainted immortal. It's impossible to associate him with vices like smoking.

With this in mind, I can't help but ask casually, "Smoking?"

The vice president, who has long silver hair and a beautiful face, raises his right hand, revealing a cigarette between his fingers.

"People are under the impression that you don't smoke," I reply with a smile.

As a slave of society, it's normal for me not to be afraid of the vice-president of the company next door. However, ensuring a cordial relationship is almost definite. After all, one has no idea when they will need to job hop and become their subordinate. Having one more friend means one more outlet.

Of course, if this gentleman keeps staying in the company next door, then I won't consider such matters. I don't want to enter a weirdo company that just yells slogans eight hundred times a day.

However, if they're willing to pay me a salary of more than 30,000 yuan a month, I dare say that I'll jump ship today. This is the business world, and the first principle is to not go against money. Anyway, as long as I don't violate the law and do not commit crimes, what's wrong with shouting slogans? If I get paid a hundred yuan with every shout, I can shout until I make the company go bankrupt!

Hearing my words, the vice-president seems to fall silent for a moment before saying, "A friend of mine taught me."

When it comes to vices like smoking, who doesn’t get introduced to it by friends? Only a small number of parents will lead their children astray… Just as I lampoon inwardly, the vice-president next door says in fluent Mandarin, “He’s been dead for many years.”

“I’m sorry,” I respond reflexively.

After that, I find it strange.

Why are you telling me this?

This vice president doesn’t look too smart…

Since we aren’t familiar with each other, I exchange a few pleasantries and stop. I’m too lazy to bother. I point to the corridor leading to my workplace.

“I have matters to tend to.”

The vice president nods without any change in expression. He turns around and walks back to the window by the elevator lobby, as if he’s watching the rainy scene below.

I leave the elevator lobby and take a right turn into my workplace and head to the office where my department is located.

They’re all gone? They took all the umbrellas? I switch on the lights and scan the room.

That’s right. It hadn’t rained when clocking off at regular hours. I left ten minutes later and happened to be caught in the rain…

Seeing that there was no one in the office, my thoughts became active.

I originally thought of watching videos in the office, checking out the young ladies dancing indoors and finding inspiration from live eating broadcasts to figure out what to eat for dinner. But now, I’m very restless, and I want to test out the various abilities of an Assassin.

Among them, the thing that attracts me the most is Leap of Faith, no—Feather Drop spell. No, that’s not right either. Who knows what it’s called. In short, it’s the ability to temporarily change my body structure and land on the ground like a light feather.

This is undoubtedly the most surreal ability of Assassins.

Of course, it is also equally important to me that I’ve had my short-sightedness cured and gained excellent vision.

I have to give it a try…

I slip my glasses into my pocket and dash to the side window of the big office.

It faces a small alley. There’s a refuse room that’s erected there and no one usually walks past it, let alone when it’s heavily raining now.

Ten stories, an empty alley. It's the best place to test the Leap of Faith. I open the window and cast my gaze down.

There are no signs of any pedestrians in the heavy rain. The roads are bleak and gloomy. It's dark everywhere.

The refuse room looks like a small hand could cover it from the tenth floor.

…

Forget it.

It's better to find somewhere lower for the first test.

Just as I reveal an embarrassed and polite smile, I hear a voice behind me.

"What are you doing?"

"…" Startled, I turn quickly.

Then, I see my boss.

He had walked into the large office with one hand in his pocket at some point in time. He's looking at me.

"…Mr. Huang, I'm checking to see if the rain has stopped." I quickly think of one reason.

My President's surname is Huang, with the first name Tao, a very handsome, fashionable man.

At the same time, he's a strange man who became a father at the age of 18. His daughter has already started college this year. He's only thirty-six years old and is still swimming through the gals. He stays on the periphery amidst the embrace of news anchors and actresses.

CEO Huang doesn't seem to have any doubts about my reason. He nods and says, "You didn't bring an umbrella?"

The more you live, the younger you become… Glancing at the president's hair which had been dyed chestnut, I honestly reply, "Don't have such a habit."

CEO Huang lifts his hand and strokes his chin.

"I have a few spare umbrellas in my office. Come over and take one."

"You prepared so many?" I ask in a respectful tone. After all, he's the one paying my salary, and it's quite sizable.

CEO Huang smiles and says, "It's from the few ladies from before. As you know, they always like to bring umbrellas with them."

You've extended the battlefield of your flings to the office? Didn't you say that the thing you're afraid of the most is letting your daughter know about this? Doesn't your daughter visit your office every week? I'm first left surprised before nodding.

"Alright."

CEO Huang doesn't say anything else as he turns and walks towards the door.

The way he's standing and how his body is posed gives me a strange feeling. I believe that if I were to seize this opportunity and unleash my full strength, I'll definitely be able to backstab him.

Is this an Assassin's instinct? Just as I have this thought, I see CEO Huang stop in his tracks and turn his head back.

Did he sense my ill intent? My body stiffens.

CEO Huang seems to be deep in thought as he slowly asks, "How's your accent?"

"Passable," I mutter carelessly.

CEO Huang nods.

"Help me pick up a VIP at the airport tomorrow morning. I'll get Old Ai to send you the details."

"Okay." I don't dare to say no.

After agreeing, I ask, "Mr. Huang, the VIP is a foreigner?"

“Yes.” CEO Huang gives an affirmative reply.

At the mention of this topic, I can’t help but ask, “Mr. Huang, why are there so many foreigners around us? We even have to come up with a foreign name in the company?”

CEO Huang leans back slightly and says, “What is an international metropolitan city?

“This is it.”

Chapter 1406: In Modern Day (4)

After borrowing an umbrella from CEO Huang, I decided to immediately leave the company and return to my rented apartment. I plan on testing out my new-found Assassin powers in what's considered the safest environment.

I live in those old districts that haven't been spruced up. I spend nearly an hour commuting via public transport. The place is filled with old and shabby houses. It's completely different from the high-end buildings found in the new city districts. But living here is more convenient. Besides, the rent is quite cheap.

Since I'm clocked off on the dot today, and there wasn't much of a delay during the journey back and forth, it's still not yet six o'clock. Even if I settle my dinner near my neighborhood, I'll arrive home before seven o'clock. It's in line with the habits of a modern person. Therefore, I didn't consider settling my dinner near the office. Instead, I rush to the bus stop with my umbrella.

This umbrella is colorful, and it has rabbit ears on it. It really isn't suitable for a stealthy man like me… I look up and run out the door.

One has to bow when under the umbrella after all.

By now, the storm has gone on for about ten minutes, and the ground is beginning to pond. If it were in the past, I would've stepped into a puddle and stained my shoes and pants with dirt and mud. But now, my feet are deft, sharp, accurate, and each step is light—I manage to keep my pants and shoes clean in the rain.

As expected of an assassin… I glance at the bus stop that's just a few feet away from me. Just as I'm about to cross the non-motor vehicle lane, I suddenly see a man walk past me without an umbrella or raincoat.

His hair is already wet under the heavy rain. His clothes cling to his body as they droop down, water streaming down continuously.

His image is so pathetic, yet his posture remains so relaxed. He isn't running at all. All he does is keep his hands in his pockets as he strolls forward.

Impressive… Due to the rain and the dark sky, I'm unable to discern his face clearly. I only watch him walk past me.

Perhaps sensing my gaze, the man suddenly takes out a cigarette from his pocket and puts it in his mouth. He mutters softly, "Wimp."

"…" I dig my ear with my empty right hand.

Who is he talking about?

Forget it, *I won't argue with a lunatic.*

I'm in a good mood today.

I ignore the man, step up to the bus stop platform, and wait for my bus to arrive.

My luck isn’t bad. It takes about a minute before Bus 35 arrives.

Taking out my travel card, I close the umbrella and rush forward.

Hearing the beep, I suddenly feel a little emotional.

If only the travel card can be stored on my phone’s NFC, it would be more convenient… I only need to bring my phone when I’m out. Door locks, the subway, and public buses can all be resolved through my cell phone… If I switch my door lock to a fingerprint one, I don’t even need to bring my keys with me. That’s what I call convenience… As I think about it, I find a seat.

Perhaps due to the heavy rain and that it’s some time after peak hour, there are still quite a few empty seats left on the usually crowded bus.

Unfortunately, the prerequisite for switching to a fingerprint lock is for me to have my own house… My fantasy is defeated by cold reality.

In this international metropolitan city, with my salary, I don’t know when I’ll be able to afford a house if I don’t get help from my parents.

I can’t help but wonder how to use the powers of an Assassin to make money.

Take on assassin missions? No, it’s illegal. Although I’m a real, powerful assassin now, I can’t beat bullets. Besides, I don’t know where to take on such missions either…

It's against the law to break into houses and steal. Besides, other people don't have their money dropping from trees, unless I can lock onto a corrupt official…

I have agile footwork, nimble limbs, and eagle-like vision. How do I earn money with these?

Be a security guard?

But how much can a security guard earn every month?

Or, try dancing? With this kind of control over the body, my dancing will definitely be very impressive. Then, I can do a live broadcast? However, I'm tone-deaf…

As I think through the possibilities, I suddenly feel a little depressed.

It wasn't easy for a miracle to fall from the sky, yet I can't use it to improve my life or earn lots of money with it.

It cured my short-sightedness at the very least. It's a medical miracle that can't be bought even with millions… I exhale slowly and tell myself not to be too greedy.

At this moment, I suddenly feel a chill.

It's not from the air-conditioning, but a coldness that pierced through my skin.

I turn my head and look to the side, only to see that there's no one sitting there.

My instincts tell me that there's something invisible there.

Hiss, a ghost? I can sense ghosts after becoming an assassin? I first widen my eyes and carefully observe. Then, I retract my gaze and pretend not to notice anything.

If the ghost realizes that I can see it, I'm doomed!

Assassins do not have abilities to deal with ghosts!

My body uncontrollably tenses up. I try to act as if nothing had happened, but I'm helpless.

The chilly feeling grows stronger, as if it's getting closer and closer to me.

I look straight, but a vision appears in my mind.

A blurry man with a bluish-black face draws nearer and nearer to me. He leans to my ear and blows his breath on my face to test my reaction.

This cold lasts for nearly a minute before it gradually weakens.

Before long, the bus stops and the two doors open at the same time.

The cold and terrifying aura disappears.

The ghost reached its stop? Even ghosts use buses to travel? Amazing… I relax and have a better understanding of the changes in my body.

I'm not surprised that there are ghosts because I have become an Assassin. Everything is possible.

The bus stops along the way and I arrived at Ankang North Road 50 minutes later.

My rental apartment is nearby.

Since the storm has stopped, I don't use the umbrella. I get off the bus and go straight for the place I had planned on eating while on the bus.

"Yuzhou Stir-fry."

There are many old shops in this old district that serve delicious food at cheap prices. This is one of them. If it weren't for the rain earlier, many tables would be set up outside.

Inside the store, I casually glance around.

"Eh…" I smile as I walk to a table and sit opposite a young man.

He ordered only a bowl of Yuxiang shredded pork and white rice. He's looking at his phone while eating with full focus.

“Not on a date?” I rap the table, startling the guy opposite me.

He’s my childhood friend, Peng Deng. Recently, he’s also been working in this international metropolitan city. As I helped him find a place to live, we ended up living very close to each other. It’s all in the same neighborhood.

“How can I have a date when the weather is so bad?” Peng Deng looks up at me.

He doesn’t put down his phone and asks, “Want to play some ranked matches tonight?”

“I’m not free.” I have no intention of playing games right now. I just want to try the “Leap of Faith.”

Peng Deng studies me intently for a few seconds.

“You have a girlfriend?”

“I hope so too.” I turn my head to the boss. “One stir-fried sliced beef, one tomato fried egg soup, and a bottle of Coke.”

When something good befalls one, celebrations are in order.

Chapter 1407: In Modern Day (5)

Upon hearing my reply, Peng Deng lowered his head again. As he looks at his phone, he feeds himself and casually asks, “What else is there after work?

“Don’t you work overtime if something’s up?”

Good question... I lean the umbrella and seriously think of an excuse.

Peng Deng is a typical smartphone zombie who doesn’t even focus on eating. Most of his attention is on his cell phone, but he’s actually a very sharp person. He’s good at capturing details and can always easily see through my lies.

Of course, most of those lies were a product of not putting enough thought into it. They’re more like jokes.

I can’t tell him that I’m trying to jump off a building, right? After some thought, I rap the table.

“My boss wants me to pick up a foreign guest at the airport tomorrow.

“And he’ll only give me the details at night. I’ll have to make some preparations. I need to practice my accent and contact a driver to confirm the schedule. It’s plenty of work.”

“Yeah, yeah...” Peng Deng takes a bite of rice and the meat shreds before swallowing it.

Then, he asks with a smile, “The Casanova boss you mentioned before?”

“I never said that.” I outright deny Peng Deng’s claim.

When he looked up at me, I smiled.

“I said he fooled around.

“You mustn’t make mistakes when passing judgment.”

“Tch.” Peng Deng replies before looking down at his phone.

Before long, the dishes I ordered are served. One is stir-fried sliced beef, and the other is tomato fried egg soup.

The oil on the former glistened, and the aroma of celery perfectly fused with the beef’s aroma. The meat was very tender, and its juices were salty, but not excessive. The sauce was filled with flavors, and with just one plate of this meat, I could finish it with three bowls of rice.

The tomato fried egg soup is part of Sichuan cuisine. Lard is used first. After it’s heated up, beaten eggs with water and salt are added to the mix until it’s completely cooked.

This way, the fried eggs would be fluffier, and there will be a certain level of saltiness to it. Following that, water and processed tomatoes are put in, along with a few green vegetables.

Finally, the soup will have the obvious fragrance of oil and eggs, mixed with the sweet and sourness of tomatoes. The freshness of the green vegetables make the soup have the delight of a meat soup, but without the cloyed taste at all.

Just as I drink a bowl of delicious egg soup, the boss walks over with a bowl of rice and a bottle of cold Coke.

“Ice Cock.” I can’t help laughing inwardly as I heard his accent.

Considering that I have to “jump off a building” later, it wouldn’t be good to eat too much. I ultimately only have two bowls of rice. Of course, I definitely wouldn’t waste the meat and eggs.

At this moment, Peng Deng still has a third of his food left.

“Don’t use your phone while eating; don’t eat while using your phone.” I stand up and give him a heartfelt lecture.

At the same time, I boldly pay only for my share.

Peng Deng and I aren’t hypocritical friends who insist on footing the bill.

Furthermore, it’s the end of the month. Finances are always a little tight during this time of the month.

“F*ck, you didn’t even give me a bottle of Coke.” It only took this long before Peng Deng realized it.

“I’m done eating.” I pick up the umbrella leaning against the table.

“Extravagant.” Peng Deng appraises my choice of buying a bottle of Coke. “Something good happened to you? Or are you moonlighting...”

Before he can ask me, his gaze suddenly stops on the umbrella with the rabbit ears in my hand.

“Hey.” He makes a strange sound.

“My boss lent it to me. You know that he has many girlfriends.” I understand what Peng Deng is thinking.

“How boring.” Peng Deng turns his attention back to his phone again.

I enter the old compound of my rented apartment after leaving the shop.

The tallest building is only six stories, so there aren’t any elevators.

When I pass the entrance to the first floor, I catch a glimpse of the mailbox through the corner of my eye.

“Uh...” Some memories churn, making me walk over involuntarily and open the letterbox that belongs to Unit 602.

There’s a postcard lying quietly inside.

Even without looking, I know that she was the one who had sent it.

She was a middle school classmate and high school classmate with me and Peng Deng. She later went overseas for studies and is currently working in this city.

Her family background is good, and she often travels. From time to time, she'll send local specialties or postcards to friends in the same city.

I hesitate for two seconds before picking up the postcard.

The back is indeed familiar as graceful handwriting is plastered across it:

"This is the famous Sedlec Ossuary around here..."

I flip the postcard and take a look. The pillars and walls that are lined with skulls make me feel horrified.

Then, I feel that strange sense of holiness.

Shaking my head, I put away the postcard and return to Unit 602.

This is an old apartment with two bedrooms and one bathroom. It has a history of at least 20 years. I live in a guest room, and a young couple lives in the master bedroom.

This couple are nice people. Not only do they have a sense of hygiene, but they often cook by themselves and invite me to eat together. The only problem is that they quarrel at least twice a week. It's quite annoying.

I plan to move to stay with Peng Deng when the rental contract is over.

Of course, the prerequisite is that he hasn't started living with his girlfriend yet.

After putting down the umbrella, I go to the window of the guest room. I peek out and look outside, considering whether I should jump.

Although the rain has stopped, the sky is already dark and there aren't many pedestrians.

Sixth floor… Forget it, I'll go to the building with the small supermarket. I think it's better to be safe for the first time.

It's only three stories.

This neighborhood is very old, and it has a large population. Hence, there are plenty of stores on the first floor. There are hairdressers, eateries, as well as grocery stores and repair shops. One doesn't even need to leave the compound to have access to these amenities.

I change into black clothes as a protective color and take my keys and phone. I arrive at a small supermarket after circling the compound for a while.

I go up the stairs to the rooftop. Looking at the height, I finally feel confident.

When I headed downstairs just now, I tried to jump from one flight of stairs to the other. It greatly improved my confidence in the “Leap of Faith.”

Waiting until there’s no one below me, I take a deep breath, climb over the railing fence, and pose in a ready stance.

It’s raining and the road is very slippery. How about next time?

If I fall and get sent to the hospital, I’ll die a societal death if everyone misunderstands this as me attempting suicide…

It’s only three stories. There was nothing wrong with the feeling I had just now…

After some random thought, I raise my middle finger at myself and exhale slowly.

With a tremble, I leap up and adjust my body.

The speed I descend at is slower than normal. The wind turns into a blanket, holding me up in silence.

This kind of slowness is only relative. I still quickly land on the ground steadily, without wobbling or splashing up the muddy water on the ground.

At that moment, I feel like a sharp feather.

What a marvelous feeling.

10 points! I praise myself.

Th-this is really too exciting!

I'm a true-blue assassin who has surpassed all mortals!

Heart blazing, I dash back to the building where my rented apartment is.

I can't wait to test the Leap of Faith from the sixth floor.

The experience just now tells me that six floors isn't a problem. If it's any higher, I'll have to be like Jackie Chan, finding items in the middle, like an air-conditioner, to break my fall, jumping down several floors at a time.

On the way, I widen my eyes in an attempt to find any acts of sexual misconduct by hooligans, robberies by ruffians, or extortions by baddies. I want to let them have a taste of the power of an assassin, but...

Sigh, the security in the neighborhood is really good...

I sigh and head home.

At this moment, my phone rings twice.

I take it out and discover that it's from my company's Old Ai. It's the information regarding our VIP.

Zaratulstra... what a complicated name. I smirk and decide on reading the details after another Leap of Faith.

Sigh, even if I'm an extraordinary assassin, I still have to work on stuff my boss instructs me to do after work like, as the Japanese put it, a *shachiku*—a corporate cattle.

Otherwise, I won't be able to survive!

What can an assassin do? Buy a Spider-Man's mask and do a Parkour live-stream session? Without being in a rush to enter the bedroom. I once again think about how to make money using my assassin abilities.

At this moment, someone knocks on the door.

"Who is it?" I ask loudly.

"I'm here to check on temporary living permits!" someone outside replies.

I don't have it, goodbye... I lampoon as I walk to the door and look outside through the peephole.

Two people in police uniforms stand outside the door, with one of them standing in front, blocking the face of the other.

He has a receding hairline and his eyes are slightly gray.

For some reason, I suddenly quiver and feel inexplicably sad.

I open the door.

“My surname is Deng, and I’m the officer in charge of this compound,” the gray-eyed officer introduces himself with a smile.

Then, he looks at the information in his hand.

“Zhou Mingrui, am I right?”

Chapter 1408: In Modern Day (6)

“Yes.” For some reason, I’m restrained and a little sad—it’s almost indescribable. It’s as if someone had punched my nose. My eyes are sore and I’m about to cry.

I can understand the restraint. Apart from a few people, most ordinary people would definitely be rather cautious when facing the police. I’m no exception.

But why do I have the sudden urge to cry?

These emotional changes and fluctuations are beyond my expectations.

From what I know, such a situation wouldn’t even happen to an extremely sensitive artistic youth.

Could this be the side effects of the Assassin potion?

Is this the price for obtaining superpowers?

I blink and control my emotions. Then, I hear Officer Deng say, “Your temporary living permit...”

Before he can finish, another officer whispers, “Captain, it’s called a residence permit now. You’ve forgotten again...”

“Yes, yes, yes. I forgot.” Officer Deng wasn’t embarrassed at all.

He smiled and said to me, “Where’s your residence permit?”

“I didn’t apply for it.” I didn’t lie, nor do I wish to lie.

“This won’t do.” Officer Deng shook his head. “Although we won’t do anything to you because you don’t have a residence permit, this is still rather important. Before you become a permanent resident here, if your child wants to study in a public kindergarten here, a residence permit is required.”

“I don’t even have a girlfriend.” I smirk forcefully but politely again.

Needless to say, I don’t have children.

“Even for you as an individual, a residence permit is very important. As you know, it’s very difficult to settle down in our city. Apart from special talents that we let in or people who take different paths, your residence permit, under normal circumstances, needs eh… a few years. Anyway, it’s a few years before you’re qualified to apply for settlement. This is as important as paying for social security.” Officer Deng added.

This makes me feel the concern of an elder. I don’t argue with him and nod.

“Yes, I’ll get it done this week.”

Officer Deng smiled and said, “Opposite to your compound is a police station that can help you in the residential application.”

He then looks at me.

“By the way, in the past two to three months, an illegal religion has been illegally proselytizing in the city. They also use the classic multi-level marketing techniques. They use more modern terms like a ‘Fully Automatic Wishing Machine’ to entice ordinary people to walk the path of evil. If you encounter them, make sure to be careful and remember to report it to us.”

Fully Automatic Wishing Machine… My heart skips a beat at the mention of it.

It sounds very similar to a vending machine.

However, no one tried to proselytize to me back then!

“…Okay.” I don’t dare to show any hesitation. I think for a second before answering.

“Thank you for your cooperation.” Officer Deng doesn’t say anything else as he smiles and puts away the tiny notebook in his hand.

Just as he turns around halfway, he suddenly stops.

“By the way, I forgot something.”

For some reason, my eyes blur upon hearing that.

“It’s a joint tenancy, right? Who’s living in the other room?” Officer Deng asks in a mellow voice.

I close my eyes and calm my fluctuating emotions.

"It's a couple."

"A lady with the surname Sia, and her overseas boyfriend."

"I see." Officer Deng nods. "Remember to remind them to register their residence."

"Alright." I watch as Officer Deng turns around.

Only then do I see the officer standing behind him.

His black hair and green eyes make him look like a celebrity.

Green eyes? He's mixed blood? Or is he wearing colored contacts? I mumble inwardly.

The green-eyed officer looks at me for a few seconds before suddenly smiling.

"That evil cult's means are more secretive than you can imagine. It's very hard to defend against them.

"At times, you won't need to pay any price to benefit from them, but believe me, you will definitely suffer immensely in the future."

My heart palpitates when I hear this fellow. I recall the Assassin potion and the "Leap of Faith" I obtained.

I got it for five yuan.

Could it really be that cult?

What do they want from me after giving me superpowers?

“I understand. I’ll make a report.” I try hard not to show my fear as I reply to the green-eyed police officer.

After sending them off, I return to the cramped guest room and sit down on the bed. I face the computer desk as I contemplate over what happened today.

It doesn’t make much sense.

If that vending machine really was created by that cult, there’s no need for them to hide. If they give every believer a bottle like the Assassin beverage, then they can rule the world!

Perhaps, there are restrictions?

But an organization that can obtain superpowers is definitely not simple. It’s not something the likes of ordinary cults can achieve.

But what’s the point of giving me superpowers?

To get a fighter?

It’s not like I’d go. If they dare to look for me, I-I’ll dare to call the *police!*

Money?

I'm just from an ordinary family in a small city. Although my family has a place to stay, in order to provide for my other two siblings, my parents haven't managed to save up much money. It wasn't until Benson and I started working that our family situation improved slightly...

After some thought, I pick up my phone and tap open WeChat. I find my brother, Benson Zhou, who works as a civil servant.

"B, did you offend anyone recently?" I send a message.

B is the nickname I gave Benson. It stems from the "B" in his name since he's balding.

"Who can I offend?" Very quickly, Benson replies. "I'm just a puny civil servant. I work cautiously every day, and I'm not a politician. I don't even serve the public at a window. Who can I offend?"

Before I can respond, he sends another message:

"What's wrong? What happened?"

"I encountered something that I suspect to be fraud, but I don't have anything worth being scammed of," I reason.

Benson replies one line at a time:

"No matter how poor a person is, there's still value in scamming them.

"Who doesn't have any friends or family? If you don't have money, can't you borrow it? Borrow from the people around you or on the Internet. Get all kinds of micro-loans, and that adds up to a huge sum.

"Besides, you still have your body. Can't you sell your kidney, cornea, and blood?

"Besides, there are many female clubs nowadays. Who knows which customer would like your type..."

"WTF, stop scaring me." After sending this text, I quickly add, "Thankfully I didn't take the hit."

I don't want Benson to worry about my drinking of the Assassin beverage.

I have to be careful. I need to immediately make a report to the police for any abnormalities around me.

After chatting for a while, Benson reminds me:

"Anyway, don't be greedy. Also, Sa Sa will be here before school starts. Remember to pick her up."

"Got it." I send him a popular emoji.

It's a monocle-wearing emoji: ⌧

After ending the conversation, I lose the urge to continue attempting the leap of faith. I sit by the bed, feeling a little frightened and worried.

After a while, I subconsciously pick up my phone and look at WeChat and QQ.

Among them, one of the QQ group chats has plenty of messages.

It was a group that I built because we play horror and mystery games. It’s called the Tarot Club, and it’s filled with other netizens.

I take a quick scan at it and see someone named The Star send a message:

“Everyone, be careful. A mysterious cult has appeared.”

Chapter 1409: In Modern Day (7)

Cult? My attention is immediately drawn to this word.

"What has a cult got to do with us?" a group member named "Judgment" asks.

"Mysterious? How mysterious?" a group member named "Justice" asks.

All kinds of messages appear in the group. It's rather overwhelming.

I originally created this group when I was playing a horror, mystery game. I invited friends who were quite good at the game back then, and such games often contain mysticism-related elements. Therefore, after the game gradually lost its popularity, the group turned into a group that leaned towards discussing mysticism.

Of course, in any chat group, daily interactions take up the majority of the content, except for sex-related chat groups.

Amongst the members, the lady named Justice is most curious about mysticism. From her daily conversations, I can tell that her family background is quite good and she isn't too old. I think she's a student.

After the group members are done asking, The Star types:

"That cult likes to attack ordinary people.

“Especially those who like mysticism!

“They will use all sorts of methods to allow you to obtain powers that exceed the limit of mortals. For example, the later it is at night, the more energetic you are.”

“I already have this superpower!” a group member named The Magician replies excitedly.

She’s also a girl. I remember her mentioning that she has a sizable income from writing novels on a certain green-colored website, and is considered one of the phenomenal writers there.

However, from the way she makes all kinds of suggestive comments when she speaks, perhaps the green-colored website I’m aware of isn’t the same website she was talking about.

“Compared to the day, I prefer the night,” says a group member named “The Moon.”

What is this fellow trying to say? Is he like a night owl, or is he hinting at something? I scratch my chin, unable to read the thoughts of The Moon.

This fellow has always been like this. If you want to say that he has deep knowledge, he will post links regarding exquisite dolls in the group chat from time to time, asking everyone to help him at some price slashing site. It’s obvious that he’s some type of shut-in. But to call him naive and immature, he often says profound things. Whether it’s Chinese medicine, Western medicine, or even all kinds of relatively unknown medical knowledge, he gives off impressive vibes with his theories and examples, even if I can hardly understand it.

Previously, he had diagnosed that one of our group members—The Hermit—had a rare disease. He successfully helped her recovery from an old ailment of hers, making everyone see him in a different light.

The Star ignores The Moon and replies to The Magician:

“Then can you only sleep two hours a day?”

“I can, but I can only maintain it for a week. I have to catch up on my sleep after that. Furthermore, my body will feel like it’s been run over by a car, with tire tracks on my face 😅,” The Magician replies.

The Star continues:

“Anyway, the cult will first allow you to obtain Superman-like powers. For example, you can remain extremely energetic despite sleeping for two hours every day. You can see all kinds of spirits, jump off tall buildings without suffering any damage, and control flames, etc., etc.”

“Isn’t this good?” Justice immediately replies.

The Sun, Judgment, and Magician say:

“Isn’t this good?”

“+1”

“+1”

I think for a moment and used my alternate account, The World.

“+1”

The Star sends an emoji:

“😫 A price is always exacted for what fate bestows.”

“I didn’t say that—Lu Xun.jpg.” The Magician replies immediately.

I suspect this is a subconscious reflex of hers.

“Is there really a power that transcends the mortal world?” Justice asks.

Clearly, she had imagined that The Star was joking.

Without waiting for The Star to respond, The Moon says:

“There are too many things in the world that go beyond your imagination.

“It doesn’t mean they don’t exist just because you don’t see them.”

The Sun immediately replies: “There’s some mysticism that’s real?”

“...Stop fooling kids 😃.” a group member named The Hanged Man sends an emoji.

“That’s right, that’s right. There are still young schooling children. One shouldn’t talk about the strange and supernatural to children or make suggestive comments!” The Magician echos in all seriousness.

The Sun replies: “I-I’m already in middle school!

“I’m more than 1.9 meters tall!”

When everyone sees the claim of being 1.9 meters tall, everyone falls silent.

After a while, The Star sends an emoji:

“😓 In short, once one is bewitched by the cult and accepts their gift, they will definitely have to pay a huge price after joining them. I heard that some people went mad and got admitted into a mental hospital. Some of them committed suicide in various ways, dying rather hideously. Others transformed...”

Before he can finish, he suddenly stops. His profile picture indicates he has gone offline.

“What transformation?” I ask with my alt, The World.

My main account is The Fool, a mature man worthy of trust. Therefore, I can’t ask questions casually.

“Could The Star be held down by those cultists?” The Magician gives a very imaginative idea.

“Haha, how could there be such a thing? I’m talking about a mysterious cul-dfflfnejkd…” Judgment is also a girl who always echoes The Magician.

After making this joke, The Star comes online again and says:

“F*ck, there was a sudden blackout just now. I had no choice but to switch phones.

“Well that’s all from me. I have to head out. I have matters to tend to.

“Anyway, there’s no such thing as a free lunch, so don’t eat it. Don’t be bewitched by the cult.

“Bye~”

As The Star goes offline, I suddenly receive private messages.

They come from The Hanged Man and The Hermit.

“Take note. I think The Star might be a member of the cyber police.”

“The Star might be a policeman. Be careful what you say in the group chat.”

…It's really possible. To actually know about mysterious cults… I immediately reply to the two group members:

"It's fine. We're not a cult ☺."

It's not like I'm always the one making suggestive comments.

Most importantly, when discussing international and domestic situations, I would stop it in time and send a picture that says "improper discussion about the imperial court is a crime that leads to death."

Glancing at the group chat again, I quit QQ and once again start thinking about what I should do.

After some thought, I'm still out of solutions. It's impossible for me to spit out the Assassin beverage, nor can I vomit it out.

I can only pretend that I don't know anything and ignore recruitment attempts of any cults. If I meet them, I'll immediately call the police… I force myself to focus on my savings and wallet.

At the thought of this, I immediately free myself from my worries and begin to work.

This is about being a slave of society.

After confirming the flight details, the chauffeur, the hotel arrangements, and the pick-up sign, I do a round of oral practice.

By the time I'm done with all of that, it's already ten in the evening.

I feel hungry.

I guess I'll go down and buy some snacks... I decide not to treat myself shabbily.

As soon as I walk out of the guest room, I hear a quarrel from next door.

Of course, it's mainly that lady named Sia Tas, who's shouting at her overseas boyfriend.

Don't you get tired of that... Just as I'm about to lampoon, I realize that the quarrel is getting softer and softer.

Uh...

According to my experience, something inappropriate for minors will happen next.

Although I'm not a minor, I'm single.

After some thought, I return to my room, open the window, and jump onto the window sill before jumping down with great familiarity.

In the wind, my body feels light as if all my worries have been blown away.

After landing safely, I heave a sigh of relief. I feel like I've completely grasped the power of Assassin.

The area outside the compound I live in remains lively late into the night. There are a few barbecue stalls, some selling fried rice, some selling stir-fried noodles. Some sell street food, like stewed meat, cold vegetables, duck necks, and crayfish. People who pass by will unknowingly sit down or come in front of a stall before sadly putting on a kilogram.

Taking into consideration my little tummy, wait, my tummy seems to be missing!

That tiny tummy I've worked so hard to get from all my meals is gone!

This is a change brought about by Assassin? I feel surprised once again.

This gives me a lot more options besides the snacks. I can have barbecue food to celebrate.

Forget it. I have to restrain myself. If an assassin is 170 cm tall, but ends up being 100 kilograms, wouldn't my target end breaking out into a laughing fit when they see me? I slowly exhale and decide to go to the 24-hour convenience store.

To the left is a FamilyMart. To the right is Lawson. It's very unfriendly for an indecisive consumer like me.

I heard that Lawson has launched a few new types of ice cream recently… I recall and turn to the right.

Just as I enter Lawson, my eyes light up as I see a gorgeous woman.

Chapter 1410: In Modern Day (8)

As an international metropolitan city, there are definitely countless beauties dressed fashionably out on the streets. Even if I don't pay attention to them, I would often find women that catch my attention.

But even so, this person that's inside Lawson is a rare gem. I can't help but steal another look after seeing her.

Her brown-dyed hair cascades down like a waterfall, and two crystal-like accessories hang from her earlobes. Her eyes sparkle, looking as clear and beautiful as the eyes of deers in forests. She has plenty of charisma.

Out of courtesy and habitual shyness, I tear my eyes away from the girl and walk past her to the area where the fridge is.

During this process, I can't help but turn around to take a few more looks, but I suppress my actions to avoid offending her.

Hmm, which ice cream should I buy? I gaze at the transparent sliding door of the coolbox and fall into deep thought.

Recently, the more popular ones are "Fat Crabs," "Iron Cauldron Stew"...

Taking into account my successful "weight loss" and my need to prevent any rebounds, as well as my tight financial situation at the end of the month, I ultimately chose "Fat Crabs."

Then, I go to the neighboring room to get a bottle of chilled CR and a packet of cucumber-flavored potato chips.

All three combined form my supper for the night.

If it was the beginning of the month, I definitely would've bought more. I'll keep them at home and eat them when there's a need. I don't have to go downstairs every time, but there's no need to be so carefree with my expenses now.

CEO Huang had once said: "Don't let trivialities take up your most important liquidity."

Without any hesitation, I take my snacks and walk to the counter to stand in line to settle the bill.

At this moment, I suddenly smell a faint fragrance.

In the next second, I turn my head and see the gorgeous beauty walk past two rows of shelves. She smiles and says with her eyes shimmering, "Can I add you on WeChat?"

?

Me? I arch my arms a little and express my puzzlement in my speech and pose.

I've never had girls ask me for my contact details all my life!

"That's right." The beauty nods happily and says with a smile, "Your looks and temperament matches my taste. I want to get to know you.”

If she were to praise me for being handsome or good-looking, I definitely wouldn’t have believed her. However, it’s not impossible that my looks and temperament matches her tastes.

Maybe she likes my type, right?

For a moment, I understand what it means to be overwhelmed and flattered.

In the next second, I become more wary.

Could it be some multi-level marketing scheme?

Or some honey trap?

As an aficionado of legal shows, a fan of the Legal Report of many years, I am instinctively wary of good things falling into my lap.

As I hesitate, the eyes of that beautiful woman standing in front of me fogs up. It makes me feel ashamed and guilty.

Perhaps it’s not some multi-level marketing or honey trap… Even if it is, she’s just adding me on WeChat. It won’t be a problem if I pay more attention in the future… I think for a moment and hurriedly say, “Alright.”

I turn around and place the bottle of CR on the counter before taking out my phone from my pocket.

However, when I look at that girl again, she has already disappeared.

It's not as if I can't see her. I can still see instances of her back appearing through the cracks of the shelves.

...*What about appreciating my looks and temperament... How did you have a change of heart so quickly?* Just as this thought flashes through my mind, I heard a chime!

The door of the convenience store opens automatically, and a figure walks in.

It's Officer Deng who had checked on my residence permit in the evening, but he has already changed into casual wear.

He walks to the front desk and tugs at the bottom of his black jacket's bottom. He says to the staff, "A cup of coffee."

As he speaks, Officer Deng turns to look at me.

"A-are you footing your bill?"

Before he can finish, he pinches his forehead.

"You are, you are Zhou, Zhou..."

"Zhou Mingrui, Officer Deng. We just met this evening," I reply with a smile.

At that moment, from the corner of my eye, I catch the woman leaving the convenience store.

She gave up striking up a conversation with me and ran off in a hurry because she saw Officer Deng? Is she really involved in multi-level marketing or pulling a honey trap?? Feeling regretful and puzzled, I hand over the items in my hand to the shop assistant and say without minding, “Give Officer Deng his coffee first.”

The shop assistant spends some time making the coffee before giving it to Officer Deng.

He gives me a friendly smile and heads out with the cup in hand.

After taking a few steps, he stops and says with a self-deprecating smile, “I forgot to remind you that the cult will use all kinds of means to approach the target. Be careful.”

Cult… Suddenly, I am aware of a possibility:

Could that beauty from before be from that cult?

She hit on me because I drank the Assassin beverage and became their target?

Th-this method really makes it impossible to guard against! They actually used a honey trap! I’m alarmed. With Officer Deng about to turn around and leave the convenience store, I rush forward and say to him, “Just now, a woman wanted to add me on WeChat.”

Officer Deng doesn’t laugh at me. He asks very formally, “What does she look like?”

“Very beautiful, more beautiful than many celebrities…” I give a simple description and conclude, “I don’t think I have the charm to make a beauty hit on me.”

“Not bad. Many victims only get deceived because they feel that they are very charming,” says Officer Deng with a smile. “We will track and investigate this. As for you, you should just try your best. Try not to speak to strangers as depicted in television dramas. Speaking is fine, just don’t establish more connections.”

My heart warms as I nod vigorously.

“Alright.”

After seeing Officer Deng leave, I return to the counter to settle the bill. I take the snacks and walk to the entrance of my residential compound.

Along the way, after passing the barbecue stall, the strong fragrance inundates my nostrils again. It tempts me to sit down and order a pile of food.

I sweep a glance, and I see a group of gangsters.

They’re sitting on simple plastic stools at the barbecue stall, waiting for the food to be cooked.

Their hair is dyed in all sorts of colors, and it’s obvious that they’re punks following the scene subculture.

If it were in the past, I definitely would've upped my pace and widened my distance to avoid any unnecessary conflicts.

But now, I'm looking forward to them making things difficult for me. I want them to have a good taste of an assassin's prowess.

Just then, one of the hoodlums glances at me and stands up abruptly.

Holding a stack of paper, he jogs towards me.

I'm thrilled and begin to imagine what pose I should put on later.

The charred yellow-eyebrowed hoodlum quickly comes in front of me and says, "Hi there, perhaps you would be interested in Dream Tutoring Classes?"

?

Dream Tutoring Classes?

This development is completely different from what I expected!

As he speaks, the hoodlum hands a flyer to me.

"Our Dream Tutoring Classes covers many topics. Even if you're already working, you can learn things from the courses to improve yourselves and even switch careers."

I blankly receive the flyer and subconsciously ask, “Are you a tutor?”

“Yes, I’m a foreign language teacher.” The hoodlum smiles arrogantly. “My surname is Da.”

Before he can finish his sentence, a few of the hoodlums shout, “Dani, the food is ready. It’s time to dig in!”

“**!” The hoodlum in front of me turns around and flips his middle finger before running back.

I shake my head in disappointment and wrap my snacks in the flier before entering my compound and return to my rented apartment building.

As this place is old, there are a few lamps along the stairs that are out. Some of the floors are dark. I have to take out my cell phones to turn on the flashlight function before I can see where I’m placing my feet clearly.

The surroundings are very quiet. My phone suddenly flashes a few times, turning extremely dim.

At the same time, I feel a cold wind blow past me.

Chapter 1411: In Modern Day (9)

As the cold wind blows, the flashlight on my phone dims. I shiver and my hair stands on end.

To be honest, after becoming an Assassin, even if there isn't any light, I can still see the surroundings clearly without worrying about what's on the ground.

But there's no conflict between me being able to see in the darkness and my need for a flashlight.

Who isn't afraid of the dark?

At that moment, my heart beats faster, pounding like a drum.

Almost at the same time, I sense someone watching me. The cold wind is the breath of a monster lurking deep in the darkness.

Recalling what happened on the bus previously, I pretended not to notice anything amiss and look down at my phone.

It's broken again?

I had previously encountered the sudden experience of my phone's flashlight dimming, but I was using a crappy phone. At this moment, the "experienced" me habitually blamed it on the phone.

After “checking” the phone and making the lights turn on again, I continue forward without anything happening.

The eerie wind is still lingering in the corridor. The light flickers in brightness, digging up the fear hidden at the bottom of my heart.

As I walk, I seriously consider what powers an Assassin has against ghosts.

The answer is:

Nothing.

Since I have nothing, I don’t look forward to slaying evil or dealing with the possible existence of a ghost as if dealing with gangsters.

One step, two steps, three steps. I calmly walk up the flight of stairs and arrive at the top floor.

The lights in the building are working fine as they shine down with their yellow light.

Everything returns to normal.

Following that, the cold gust of wind stops. The light stops flickering. I successfully return to the sixth floor and stop at the entrance of my rented apartment.

Phew, there’s actually a ghost present here! I have to move out as *soon as possible!* This thought subconsciously flashes across my mind.

I don't feel any shame. This is an instinctual response that anyone can have!

However, if I quietly moved away, Sia Tas and her boyfriend would definitely not know what's happening here. They'll continue living here. Who knows whether the devil might pester them… Also, there are twelve units in this building. It's impossible for me to inform every household, right? Also, how do I say it? Ghosts? Who would believe me? I hold my key, momentarily held in a difficult spot.

Quickly hire a capable Daoist priest or monk to exorcise the ghost? But I don't know any. Before today, I didn't even know that there are supernatural powers in this world. It was all fantasy… Yes, the Tarot Club's The Star knows that the mysterious cult provides all kinds of superpowers, which means he has a certain level of understanding in such matters… Will he know a few masters who are good at busting ghosts? Phew, I'll give it a try. If there's nothing I can do, I'll make an anonymous call to inform the police. I'll post a flyer that mentions how this place is haunted at every household's door, No, not flyer, a bulletin… I quickly come up with a plan.

As for the outcome, I don't have any demands. After all, I don't have any experience in this area. Besides, I should prioritize protecting myself.

Opening the door, I enter the room and return to my room. I think for a while before logging on to QQ and entering a private chat with The Star.

Uh, The Hanged Man and The Hermit suspect that he's a member of cyber police. If I were to directly look for him, he will definitely *be able to find my IP address and lock onto my identity…* Just as I'm about to type the message, I remember the warning from two other members of the Tarot Club.

After tinkering for a while, I use a proxy and use my alt, The World, to say to The Star:

" Are you there? I have something to ask you."

"…Don't use that emoji. It scares me." The Star replies quickly.

"Why?" I ask.

The Star says:

" This emoji has become popular recently. It's very strange.

"Furthermore, something tragic happened to a family last week. Everyone in that family wore a monocle and died in different places. The only survivor was a girl who went mad from the trauma. She repeatedly tells people not to go near her.

"I suspect that those who use this emoji will be targeted by an unknown existence. They will automatically put on a monocle and commit suicide or kill each other."

"Don't scare me ." I reply, unsure if I should believe him.

"Haha, it's just a joke. The monocle in this emoji is on a different eye from the tragedy. Furthermore, there are thousands of people using this emoji. Which unknown existence can keep an eye on everyone?” The Star switches to asking, “Why are you looking for me?”

I directly say:

“My area is haunted. Do you know anyone who’s good at ghostbusting?”

“I’m very good at that.” The Star replies without hesitation.

Then wouldn’t I be exposed? I quickly send an emoji:

“ I won’t trouble you for the time being. You seem very busy.

“Do you have anyone else that you could introduce to me?”

“Yes, a lady, a medium. She’s skilled in techniques from overseas, but I can guarantee that it’s effective. There’s another foreigner, a priest. He’s also good at setting up exorcism rituals.” The Star replies.

“They’re all foreigners? You don’t have Daoist priests or monks to introduce?” I’m more trusting towards local ones.

The Star replies:

“I only know foreign ones!”

“Okay. Who’s better?” I had wanted to ask who’s cheaper, but considering how someone cheap might not do the job, I don't dare to skimp on that.

The Star immediately says:

"Ma'am Da."

"I'll give you her QQ number. Add her directly and contact her.

"XXXXXXXXXXXXX."

"Okay, thank you." I quickly copy the QQ number and paste it into the search box.

Ma'm Da's QQ name is "SleepingWithCorpses," and adding her requires one to answer a verification question: "How old are you?"

How old? This question is strange... Do I need to use a countersign? I'm puzzled for a moment. I take a screenshot and send it to The Star.

"What's the answer?"

The Star replies:

"Just answer that you're an adult."

"What's the meaning of this? She doesn't entertain underaged clients?” I’m confused.

“No. She just wants to determine the extent she can go in the conversation.” The Star answered simply, and then used an image to supplement it: Open to suggestions, ready to be suggestive.

“…” For some reason, I’m at a loss on how to respond. I fill up the verification according to The Star’s answer and fill in “Adult.”

Da doesn’t seem online. I didn’t get added even after a few minutes. After thanking The Star, I use snacks to console myself.

After eating and drinking, I head to the bathroom outside to wash up and prepare to head to bed.

Ma’am Da still hasn’t added me.

I switch on the bathroom light and turn on the tap. I reach for the towel.

Turning around, I suddenly see a figure in the mirror.

That figure is blurry. Vaguely, I see it wearing a small hat. It’s a woman in a black dress.

Clearly, this isn’t my projection!

It can’t be Sia Tas, who wears pajamas as home!

Instantly, my mind explodes and I hurriedly retreat.

“Don’t be afraid,” the woman in the mirror says in an ethereal voice. “Someone hired me to protect you.”

“Who?” I ask subconsciously.

The figure in the mirror replies calmly, “A detective named Sherlock Moriarty.”

Chapter 1412: In Modern Day (10)

Sherlock Moriarty?

Sounds like a foreigner…

Moriarty… seems to be the professor in Holmes… Sherlock seems to be Holmes's first name… This detective is using a fake name, right? It has a style reminiscent of coming up with a name when creating a game avatar… Perhaps he isn't a foreigner…

I sense something from the ghost in the mirror and ask after some thought:

"Who is he?

"Why does he want to protect me?"

At this moment, due to the other party's ability to communicate, my sense of fear has been greatly reduced.

I've become an Assassin. Isn't it normal for ghosts to exist in this world?

It isn't hard to accept something that goes against common sense!

Besides, it's not like I didn't sense something on the bus on the way home.

The blurry woman wearing a petite bonnet in the mirror replies in a flat voice, “Someone wants to harm you.”

She didn’t tell me who Sherlock Moriarty is. Why does he want to protect me… It looks like it’s a secret. What is it that can’t be said? Many thoughts flash through my mind.

Suddenly, I think of a possibility and blurt out, “That cult wants to harm me?

“Sherlock Moriarty is their archenemy?”

That makes sense!

Otherwise, I wouldn’t believe that someone would send a female ghost to protect me for no reason, unless it’s the police who serve the people.

The female ghost in the mirror falls silent for two seconds before nodding indiscernibly.

“You can put it that way.”

At that moment, I feel a subtle change in her eyes, but I can’t decipher what emotions are contained within them.

Under normal circumstances, a person without any training would more or less reveal their emotions in their eyes. This would help me understand their attitude.

But the entity right in front of me is a ghost.

More importantly, the things that can be discerned through the eyes most of the time are the more intense fluctuations in emotions or unconcealed emotions. Not only is the female ghost in the mirror blurry, but she also has a mosaic over her. Furthermore, her emotions are very mild, almost as though she's emotionless.

After pondering for a moment, I probe, "Which people around me are from the evil cult?"

The female ghost in a black dress opens her mouth.

"They…"

Her voice becomes increasingly ethereal as it turns weaker and weaker.

Following that, a fine layer of snow appears on the surface of the mirror, just like an old television that has its reception hampered.

The female ghost vanishes amidst the static.

This…

What happened?

I'm not afraid of ghosts anymore, so why did the ghost disappear instead?

Did something happen again?

I turn wary and look around, but everything's normal.

When I look back, the mirror has returned to its original state, reflecting my fearful and blank face.

Splash.

The water from the tap gushes out incessantly.

Unconsciously, I grab my wet towel and wash my face.

Nothing has changed.

At the same time, I don't sense anything unusual.

Yes, *no matter what*, *I still have to brush my teeth*… I force myself to stay calm.

Since things are already like this, what's there to worry about?

After brushing my teeth and wiping my mouth, I return to my room.

The moment I enter, I feel an indescribable feeling.

My eyes are drawn to my cell phone, which I have set on the computer table.

It seems to be the source of all the abnormalities.

Instinctively, I charge over, wanting to hurl the phone out of the window so it's far away from me.

However, it's very expensive. I changed it not too long ago... I don't know if there's something wrong with it... I'm already an Assassin, *and there's the female ghost protecting me. What's there to be afraid of?* I console myself, walk over, pick up my phone, and plaster my fingerprint on it.

After unlocking the screen, the first thing I see is a message:

'SleepingWithCorpses has added you.'

In the next second, my cell phone darkens suddenly, and the lights around me seem to be attracted by this bottomless pit. They are all thrown into the pitch-black darkness.

Before I can react, the faint light on my phone ripples, revealing a translucent face that's without any eyes, nose, or mouth.

"There's a ghost in your room."

The mouth of the face opens and closes, revealing a long and bright red tongue. There are five slender fingers at the tip of the tongue, and embedded on the two sides are rows of irregular sharp teeth.

Don't tell me you're not one too? I have the urge to give such a reply, but I hold myself back.

Recalling the message I just read, I ask with a slightly trembling voice, “Ma’am Da?”

Impressive!

She really is psychic and can control ghosts!

“Yes, I’ve already made some initial restrictions via the messenger. That ghost won’t affect you tonight, and it won’t have the chance to suck you dry.” The translucent wobbles shook. “I’ll come personally tomorrow morning to deal with it. Give me the address.”

“Tomorrow morning? I have work to do.” I am thrown into a dilemma.

CEO Huang wants me to pick up the VIP at the airport!

If I stand him up, I will lose my job!

“Work? Is your boss beautiful?” Madam Da asks through the translucent face.

“He’s a guy,” I point out the truth.

“You like men?” Madam Da asks without pause.

“How is that possible?” I deny it, amused and exasperated.

“Since that’s not the case, why are you still in the mood for work even though you’re haunted by ghosts? Or perhaps, you have a female colleague that you have a crush on? You can’t skip a day of seeing her?” Madam Da scoffs.

“...Can’t it be because I’m poor? If I don’t work, who will take care of me?” I have a nagging feeling that I’m being led astray by Madam Da. The conversation is filled with logical errors.

Although I have some savings, it’s not a lot, and I have to pay for the exorcism.

Of course, I’m in the mood to work because the female ghost hasn’t shown any malice.

Madam Da’s translucent face opens its mouth and says, “What about your family?”

“They aren’t well-off,” I answer frankly.

“Uh... how are your looks?” Madam Da asks another strange question.

“Average.” I feel lost.

“Height?”

“A little over 1.7 meters.”

“Strong?”

“Ordinary.”

“How big?”

“Huh?”

“How big is that thing of yours?”

“Hey!”

“It’s like this: I can introduce you to some part-time work. The other party consists of rich and idle mature ladies. They value young people very much. They’re willing to provide the necessary help and become friends with mutual benefits. Do you want to consider them?” the translucent face rambles on.

“…Auntie, am I just going to give up on my hard work?” I roughly understand what the other party was talking about.

“As long as you understand.” The translucent, terrifying face lets out a suspicious laugh.

“I don’t plan on doing so,” I say without hesitation.

I have my integrity!

Madam Da doesn’t bother with the topic and instead says, “Then, when will you get off work tomorrow? Let’s schedule an appointment.”

“Nine in the evening.” I include the possibility of working overtime.

“Alright, give me the address. I’ll contact you on QQ when the time comes.” Madam Da’s translucent face yawns.

This lady’s extraordinary performance has exceeded the limits of my knowledge, so I no longer have any doubts about her abilities. I immediately give her an address and ask, “Eh… Eh… How much will it cost?”

“The basic cost is 20,000 yuan. The price can go higher depending on the difficulty. If you can’t afford it, you can consider the part-time job.” Madam Da is rather direct.

I recall my savings and feel a wave of pain.

“What’s the maximum it can go?”

Why don’t I just forget it?

Besides, the female ghost doesn’t seem to have any ill intentions.

“The highest it can go is 50,000 yuan,” Madam Da calmly says.

“50,000. Only 50,000?” I’m surprised.

The translucent face snorts.

“I’ll give up missions that exceed 50,000. Money is nice, but I need to be alive to spend it.”

“… Okay.” I see myself on the brink of bankruptcy.

“By the way, I’ll give you a document. You can download it and read about how to get along with ghosts.” The translucent face slowly slides back into the phone.

Then I see SleepingWithCorpses send me a BitTorrent seed.

I open it and realize that there are a few videos in it. They’re quite large in size and are named “1,” “2,” and “3.”

Due to the seriousness of the matter, I don’t hesitate and turn on my computer to download it.

While I initiate the download, I start playing games to pass time.

After a while, the download completes. I open the video file named “1.”

In just a few seconds, a title appears in front of me:

“A Chinese Ghost Story.”

“I…”

On the glass window, a blurry female ghost wearing a long black dress appears. She holds her cheek with one hand and quietly stares at the computer screen.

Chapter 1413: In Modern Day (11)

...Ma'am Da really has a sense of humor... It's a good thing that my broadband company doesn't charge based on data usage... I control the twitch in the corner of my lips and turn to look out the window.

She's here again... A female ghost watching A Chinese Ghost Story. It feels weird...

Since she doesn't show any malice and had pointed out the problem of the cult, while I lack the ability to fend off ghosts—Assassins aren't capable of doing such things—I ask after some consideration, "Do you want to continue watching?"

I watched this movie a long time ago. There's no need for me to rewatch it.

Besides, I still have to go to the airport to pick up the VIP tomorrow; I can't stay up all night.

If I'm late or something goes wrong, I'll definitely have my salary deducted or maybe even get fired!

Thankfully, I haven't taken any housing loans, or bought things on credit. I don't have any credit card payments and promissory notes to pay. Otherwise, I would've rejected Madam Da just now and looked for someone cheaper.

The female ghost on the glass window turns her head and looks at me.

"Will it affect your sleep?"

"Just wear headphones. Don't worry about the light," I answer frankly.

The female ghost nods and suddenly disappears from the window.

Then, her figure appears on the screen, almost merging with the movie scene.

At the same time, the sound of the computer speaker mutes, and the light on the screen dims.

Impressive. As expected of a female ghost… I don't know why, but I feel that my fear of ghosts is decreasing.

Thinking back to when I was young, I was often scared out of my wits by horror movies; yet, I couldn't help but secretly watch them, feeling both pain and happiness.

I get up, switch off the light in the room, climb into bed, pull the duvet over me, and drape it over my chest.

I close my eyes as I prepare to sleep. Vaguely, I feel like I've forgotten something.

A minute later, I snap awake. I open my mouth and say, "Goodnight."

As a successor of socialism, I have to be polite even when facing female ghosts.

A few seconds later, an ethereal voice reverberates in my ears.

“Goodnight.”

With this done, I begin to sleep with ease. Not long after, I fall into a deep sleep.

When I wake up, I realize that the sky is already bright. Sunlight passes through the curtains, scattering across my bed.

Out of habit, I laze in bed for a few minutes, and slowly I become conscious. I sit up slowly.

Turning my head instinctively, I see that the monitor screen has been switched off. However, the computer hasn’t switched off. It’s still blinking red.

“...Did she leave after she was done watching?” I gradually recover my memories from last night, like I’ve experienced a clear dream.

Shaking my head, I pick up my cell phone to check the time.

*F*ck!*

I scramble up and dash to the bathroom.

I'm almost late!

If I were to mess things up, *CEO Huang will skin me alive!*

He only treats pretty girls kindly!

At that moment, there's no Assassin, cult, female ghost, or medium to interfere with my thoughts.

For humans, living takes the utmost priority.

And the most important thing needed to live is to have money.

After five minutes, I finish washing up and changing my clothes. I rush downstairs.

Here, I have to thank my two roommates. They always sleep late and wake up late. They don't clash with the time when I need to use the bathroom. They don't delay my getting to work.

Peng Deng had said before that the person he rented an apartment with in another city would always take hour-long baths in the morning, making him either have to wake up early or bring his toothbrush and towel to the office.

I suddenly feel regret when I reach the staircase. I'm an assassin. I could've jumped from the sixth floor.

This could've saved me plenty of time!

However, there must be a lot of pedestrians outside at this point. If I dare go up the windowsill, they would probably call the cops. That would only waste more time.

Without another thought, I jump down the more than tens steps at a time, allowing me to quickly reach the ground floor.

During this process, I even had the time to unlock my phone and hire a car to send me to the airport.

I can make a claim for transportation expenses since it's for business!

My luck isn't bad. Very soon, someone takes my request. Furthermore, he's nearby. After I rush out of the compound, a white peer-to-peer ridesharing car stops in front of me in less than a minute.

Perfect!

As I heave a sigh of relief, I pull the door open and climb in.

"Airport."

"Okay." The driver is wearing a mask and has no habit of striking up a conversation.

This is what I like.

Just like I like having a mute for my haircuts.

I glance at my phone again. After confirming that I still have time even if I encounter a traffic jam, I call the chauffeur and confirm that he's on his way to the airport.

This driver isn't part of our company. He's from the local office branch that the foreign VIP is part of.

In other words, there's no need for me to pick up Mr. Zaratulstra as his own employee will be responsible for it. However, CEO Huang still sent me to receive him to show his sincerity.

After making sure that everything is fine, I start using my phone.

In the process, I see a joke post:

"Why is the person I'm seeing suddenly ignoring me?

"She insisted on going to my house to watch a movie yesterday. I still had to wake up early for work, so I got her to sit by the bed and watch it alone..."

Heh... I mock this guy and check the replies.

About an hour later, the car arrives at the airport.

Thankfully, I'm still early... I breathe a sigh of relief and give the driver a five-star rating.

Then, I open the flight schedule and confirm the arrival time.

"...NH6567 landed at the alternate airport, Ning Bei Airport, due to an engine malfunction..."

*Holy sh*t, is this for real?* I quickly call the other party's chauffeur.

"Hey, there's a problem with the flight. It was redirected to Ning Bei."

"I'll immediately give Mr. Zaratulstra a call and confirm if he will immediately make a domestic transfer or if he will come by high-speed rail. Or whether we should wait for tomorrow," the chauffeur says rather calmly.

"Okay, where are you? I'll come and meet you first." I'm having a headache just thinking that I might have to wait at the airport for a few more hours.

After asking for the location of the car park, I walk all the way there and find the chauffeur.

This driver is a foreigner with black hair and blue eyes. He had a mustache that isn't too thick, and he looks rather handsome.

"Hello? How do I address you?" I ask as I approach.

Previously, Old Ai only gave me a number and a Chinese name. Now, I would like to call him by his actual name.

The driver nods and says, "Mr. Zaratulstra has already bought a ticket that will fly off in an hour. He will be here very soon. Please inform CEO Huang about the developments."

“Okay.” I stifle my inner groan.

This means that I might have to stay at the airport until noon.

The chauffeur continues, “My name is Rosago.

“I’m a staff member from the MISTER Company.”

“Your Chinese is very good. Which country are you from?” I casually compliment as I comfort myself.

“France,” Rosago smiles and replies.

Chapter 1414: In Modern Day (12)

“France is great.” I had plans of politely complimenting his country, but perhaps because I’m used to lampooning, I almost blurt out: “Great at surrendering.”

“Cough…” I cough dryly and say no more, lest he finds Chinese-styled sense of humor unacceptable.

After chatting for a while, I point in the direction of the airport.

“Mr. Zaratulstra will take a few more hours before he arrives. Shall we head inside and have something to drink?”

“Wine?” Rosago looks at me.

“No. I mean coffee, tea, cola, and so on. Don’t drink and drive.” I’m surprised that his first reaction towards the suggestion is wine.

You’re a professional chauffeur!

Aren’t you a little too rash?

The foreigner, Rosago, clearly didn’t understand my humor. After thinking for a few seconds, he says, “Sorry, I woke up too early today and am still a little sleepy. I’ll be sleeping in the car for a while.”

"Okay." I secretly breathe a sigh of relief.

Although I'm not against social interactions, and I'm even willing to be on good terms with people from a partnered company, I still feel a little uncomfortable thinking about having to spend a few hours with a stranger I'm not familiar with.

Even if the other party were a beauty, this feeling wouldn't be any less.

Yes, that's the case for me. Perhaps he shares the same thoughts. That's probably why he chose to sleep in the car.

Returning from the parking lot to the airport, I randomly find an empty seat and sit down, not putting what I said about drinking something into practice.

It all costs money!

Based on my understanding of CEO Huang, he's quite generous. But at the same time, as the big boss, he wouldn't pay attention to the reimbursements of a mere employee. These sorts of trivial matters are usually handled by the finance department that follows a particular procedure.

Therefore, if I waited until noon at the airport, I would definitely be able to claim the expenses for lunch, but I would have to bear the expenses for coffee, cola, tea, snacks, etc. Those are unnecessary expenses.

Of course, if I could get Comrade Rosago to join me for the meal, then I would be able to claim such expenses—client entertainment!

For this reason, when I invited him earlier, I was actually quite sincere. At least half of it was true.

After sitting for a while and using my phone, I suddenly realize a serious issue:

I hadn't had breakfast yet!

I had left in a hurry this morning!

As I listen to the rumbling of my stomach and feel my thirst and hunger, I decide to find something to eat.

Food at the airport is expensive. Shall I look for KFC or McDonalds, or get some random slice of bread? I stand up and head to the side of the lobby.

When I see the first shop that looks like it sells local delights, I turn in and look for food that's cost-efficient.

My phone buzzes as I approach the frozen foods section.

“Hello, Mr. Rosago. What's the matter?” I glance at the caller ID.

Rosago's voice comes from the other end of the line:

“Ning Bei is undergoing a thunderstorm. All flights are canceled.

“Mr. Zaratulstra will switch to using the high-speed railway.”

Isn't this fellow too unlucky… I'm amused yet helpless.

"Then shall we wait at the railway station?"

There's definitely more than enough time because the high-speed railway station is just below the airport.

Even if Mr. Zaratul couldn't buy a ticket to stop at this station, it would take a maximum of 90 minutes from the airport to the municipal high-speed railway station. It takes less time than the time it takes from Ning Bei to this city.

"Wait a little longer. I'll wait for confirmation," Rosago replies calmly.

As we speak, I see the door to the ice cabinet push open. A small, fair, fat hand reaches in and picks up a Baxy-branded white peach oolong-flavored ice cream.

I trace this hand and see a child that looks around one year old.

I have no clue regarding its gender. Sitting in a pram, its face is chubby and it cannot stop chirping. It's really adorable.

Such a young child eating ice cream? The parents are so irresponsible! I gaze up at the adult pushing the pram, and find a gentle, beautiful woman.

I have no intention of stopping them. It's none of my business.

As long as they don't abuse the child, all I'll do is lampoon.

However, is letting a one-year-old eat ice cream a form of abuse?

Anyways, the child appears quite happy.

After hanging up the phone, I consider the possibility that we have to rush over to the high-speed railway station at any time. I simply make a choice, getting some packaged pastries and bottled water before paying for it at the cashier.

Just as I find a place to sit down and quickly finish breakfast, Rosago calls again.

“The tickets for today’s high-speed railway have been sold out. Mr. Zaratulstra will have to stay there and come tomorrow.”

He sure is filled with bad luck… That’s good too. I can head back directly. I don’t have to wait until noon or head to the railway station… I tersely acknowledge.

“Then let’s head back first?”

“Yes, we’ll come again tomorrow,” Rosago says immediately. “Come to the parking lot. I’ll send you back. I’m returning to the city anyway.”

“…Sure,” I reply with a smile.

It’s not that I’m saving money and being greedy. After all, I can also claim my travel expenses for my trip back.

However, there’s nothing wrong with having good relations with the employees of a partnered company at work.

Even if I don't end up getting an additional order, it gives me another outlet for job-hopping in the future.

The only problem is how I'll get along with him later.

It can be quite awkward if two unfamiliar people were to get together.

Let's just talk about work. It's only about an hour anyway… I console myself. I leave the airport and find Rosago and his Mercedes.

I get into the car and buckle my seatbelt. Before I can say anything, Rosago turns his head to give me a glance.

"Sit tight."

Huh? I feel lost for a moment.

The next second, the car starts and speeds off.

Hey, hey, hey, hey. This is still a parking lot. You're driving too fast! Ah!

After a series of bends, the car slows down and exits the parking lot through the gantry.

Then, the Mercedes continues to race. It swerves left and right on the road, taking up any empty spots. Not only is he on the verge of exceeding the speed limit, but he also shows no signs of stopping.

On several occasions, I imagined that there would be a car accident, but with Rosago's control, the car nimbly avoids danger.

“This—aren't you driving too fast?” I ask, coming back to my senses and gulping.

“Don't worry. I used to be a racer,” Rosago says as he looks ahead, his eyes bright.

But isn't it too fast? This is a city road, not a race track… I lampoon nervously.

I don't dare to say another word, afraid that Master Rosago would be distracted and might end up hitting a guardrail or harming the innocent.

At this moment, I recall my ability as an Assassin. I decide that if anything were to go wrong, I would jump out of the car to seek refuge or forcefully control Rosago to stop the vehicle.

40 minutes later, the racing car stops outside the building where my company is located.

“…Thank you. Thank you.” My face is a little pale as I unbuckle the seat belt.

If it weren't for my abilities as an Assassin and my outstanding balance, I definitely would've gotten carsick and puked all over the ground.

"You're welcome. See you tomorrow." Rosago waves with a smile.

"..." I exhale and bid the racer farewell.

Entering the building, I glance subconsciously at the spot where the vending machine had appeared. It's empty.

Fortunately... I head upstairs and press the "up" button.

As I wait, I lower my head and straighten my clothes.

Suddenly, a pair of long legs wearing leather boots walk over.

Chapter 1415: In Modern Day (13)

I raise my head subconsciously and glance to the side.

This instantly makes me feel a little uncomfortable.

This isn't because the other party is a gorgeous beauty, but because she's CEO Huang's daughter.

Miss Bernie Huang!

This lady's eyebrows are straight, her nose high, and she wears a pair of blue-tint colored contacts. Together with her slightly curled hair that she dyed a chestnut color, she has a level of beauty belonging to foreigners.

Seeing her look at me, I instinctively open my mouth to greet her.

Miss Huang?

No, that might bring about negative connotations...

My lady, Miss Huang?

It's too exaggerated, just like a brainless idol drama...

Madam Huang?

This clearly doesn't suit a young girl. She'll get angry…

Teacher Huang?

She's still a student…

As my thoughts run through my mind, the young lady, Miss Bernie Huang, nods at me.

“Hello.”

“Hello,” I respond reflexively, using an honorific greeting.

“Is my dad in the office?” Miss Huang asks softly.

“Oh, sorry. I don't know. I just came back from some work outside. I haven't stepped into the office yet,” I answer honestly.

Miss Huang nods slightly and doesn't say anything else because the lift we're waiting for has already reached the first floor.

As the lift moves up, I try my best to find a topic to prevent the situation from being awkward, but I don't dare to strike up a random conversation.

CEO Huang treasures his daughter very much. If I were to offend her by saying something wrong, I might be fired today!

“Zhou…” At this moment, Miss Huang turns to look at me and says hesitantly, as if she’s trying to recall my name.

“Zhou Mingrui.” I hurriedly say my name.

Although Miss Huang often comes to the office to help her mother check on her father, I believe that she definitely doesn’t know a mere employee like me. To be able to have a slight impression of my surname means that her memory is beyond imagination.

“Mr. Zhou, I have something I need your help on.” Miss Huang asks politely.

“No problem. As long as I can do it!” I reply without hesitation.

As long as Miss Huang is satisfied, a promotion and a pay raise would not be too far away.

As we speak, we exit the elevator and enter the company.

“Help me translate a batch of documents for me.” Bernie Huang walks in her leather boots as she says.

“Translate… What language is it?” I ask hurriedly.

“Cursive script,” Miss Huang replies simply.

Cursive script… I haven’t learned that before… Just as I’m about to answer, Miss Huang suddenly picks up her pace.

We have already arrived outside CEO Huang's office.

This lady doesn't give CEO Huang any face at all. She walks past the female secretary that is stationed outside, nimbly reaching out her hand and pushing open the door gently.

Let's hope that CEO Huang isn't spreading his love early in the morning… I silently pray in my heart before taking an indiscernible step to the side in case I get embroiled in CEO Huang's family matters.

Of course, I'm not that nervous either. After all, CEO Huang is experienced. If he were to do any sordid deeds in the office, he would definitely lock the door from the inside.

As expected, there's no one in the office.

"CEO Huang is at a meeting." The female secretary stands up nervously and tells Miss Huang.

"I'll wait for him inside." Miss Huang nods and walks into the room.

One step later, she turns her head and says, "Mr. Zhou, please come in."

"Alright." I walk over and quickly say, "I don't have much knowledge about cursive script."

"Take a look first." Miss Huang stops by the door and says.

When I enter, she casually closes the door.

Then, she flips her sling bag and takes out a stack of paper.

“Try and see if you can read it. If possible, read it to me.”

“Okay.” I take the stack of papers from her.

“…” My whole body turns stiff from that cursory look.

If I’m not wrong, the cursive script on the paper is from CEO Huang!

I’ve seen the comments he had written on documents on several occasions!

Th-this is CEO Huang’s diary? Damn, don’t tell me he writes down every affair? Which decent person writes a diary! I can’t help but sweat.

If I read it, I offend CEO Huang.

If I don’t read it, I offend Miss Huang.

What does it mean to be in a dilemma? This is what it means to be in a dilemma!

Wait, I don’t know cursive script. Haha, I can’t read it! Although I can barely make out what CEO Huang has written, I really don’t *know any cursive script!* I immediately open my mouth.

“M-Miss Huang, I can’t…”

Before I finish, the office door is pushed open.

Thud!

CEO Huang rushes in and he scans the both of us with his widened eyes.

He retracts his gaze from the gap between me and Miss Huang, and he smiles.

“Bebe, why didn’t you give me a call? I could’ve gone down to bring you up.”

“I’m already of age.” Miss Huang glances at me from the corner of her eye. “I’m just making a request to Mr. Zhou for his help.”

I Immediately understand her intention. Secretly, I pull the documents behind my back.

“Call him Uncle Zhou!” CEO Huang smiles as he emphasizes. Then, he turns his head to look at me. “You may leave. I’ll holler if there’s anything.”

“Okay.” I use this opportunity to leave the office and return to my seat, where I hide the papers.

Before I can switch on the computer, Rozanne leans in and says with a suppressed voice, “You’re finished.”

“Ah?” I stare blankly.

“Don’t you know that CEO Huang dotes on his daughter to the point of having an obsession? He hates seeing other men get close to his daughter the most. During Miss Huang’s past few visits, the men who took the initiative to offer their help have either ‘quit’ or transferred to a branch company at a Tier 3 city,” Rozanne said with a chuckle.

“...It can’t be. I was just in proximity to her. I mainly did so because I wanted to please CEO Huang.” I grit my teeth from hearing that.

“Tsk, don’t you know what kind of man CEO Huang is? In his eyes, all men are the same as him. If one has money, they’ll definitely be playing around, loving everyone they see—no, making love to everyone they see. If one doesn’t have money, then they’ll seduce the rich and beautiful lady, take up the post of CEO, and elevate themselves to the peak point of life. Therefore, in the eyes of men like you, Miss Huang is the most tempting of prey,” Rozanne said half-jokingly.

“It’s just that... It’s just that Miss Huang asked me for help. I wasn’t playing around at all!” I feel wronged.

“You really weren’t playing around?” Rozanne casually asks.

“Of course.” I immediately raise my fingers in an oath. “Think about it. To develop and maintain a relationship, you’ll need about two to three hours a day, right? If it’s two relationships, it’ll take four to five hours. There are seven hours for sleep every night, an hour’s nap in the afternoon, nine hours of work, and three meals which add up to an hour. That’s already 18 hours, leaving only six hours left in a day. If I were playing around and tried to two-time, I wouldn’t have the time to play games, watch videos, or read novels! How tiring, how boring!”

“Makes sense…” Rozanne slowly nods before saying with a smile, “Right now, you need a book on time management.”

Before I can answer, she continues, “But how does CEO Huang manage to ‘N-time’ so many women?”

“He’s different. If it’s just one partner, then he might take one hour out of his two-to three-day schedule to maintain the relationship,” I answer thoughtfully.

Rozanne tersely acknowledges.

“That’s right. CEO Huang is different from us. He’s handsome and rich…”

“Sigh.” Rozanne and I sigh at the same time.

Rozanne, who’s quite the gossipmonger, suddenly shrinks back.

“Old Ai is here, I’ll be returning to my seat first.”

Just as Rozanne leaves, CEO Huang’s person-in-charge, the corporate office’s Director Ai appears and stops in front of me.

He’s already old. His hair is completely white, and his face is pale.

“Send everything you need to claim today to finance. You don’t have to receive Mr. Zaratulstra anymore,” Old Ai says to me as I hurriedly stand up.

…*No way… They’re firing me already? I’m going to get some severance pay?* I’m momentarily stunned.

Old Ai passes me a document and continues,

“Liaise with the members involved in this project. It’s a project the company is working on with the police.”

Oh… The turn of events is too sudden that I don’t know how to respond.

Realizing that I don’t have to ride with Rosago tomorrow, I have the baffling feeling that it might not be a bad idea.

Chapter 1416: In Modern Day (14)

After finding the project team and gaining an understanding of the situation, I spend quite a bit of time organizing the information. I also leave the company at three in the afternoon, preparing myself to head towards the city's police station to visit the staff in charge.

After leaving my company's building, I take out my phone, open my ride-sharing app, and submit my destination.

Since it's not the evening rush hour, I get a driver in just a few seconds.

He's in the vicinity, one minute… I glance at the notification and am very pleased that I don't need to wait too long.

One minute passes quickly, but as I look left and right, I don't see the license plate that I remember.

Suspecting that I've misremembered, I hurriedly unlock my phone to confirm the situation.

At this moment, I heard the chiming of a bicycle bell.

Uh… I subconsciously look up and see a green-orange bicycle.

Sitting on the bicycle is a young man wearing a dark baseball cap and a thin black coat.

Ring! Ring! Ring!

The bicycle stops in front of me as the man extends his right foot to support the bicycle against the ground.

His forehead is wide and his face is thin. His short black hair is slightly curled, and his eyes are darker than an ordinary person's—close to pure black.

His biggest characteristic was that, like a cosplayer, he wore a crystal monocle on his right eye.

Holding the bicycle's handle with one hand, the man adjusts his monocle with the other. He smiles at me and says, "You were the one who requested a ride?"

…

I did, but I requested a car, not a bicycle…

I open my mouth, unsure if I should answer.

At that moment, I even underwent existential questions: Who I am. Where am I? Where am I going?

"You're going to the police station, right?" The young man with the monocle didn't care that I didn't respond as he asked with a smile.

…No way? Is there really an option for getting a bicycle? And I selected it somehow? I slowly nod.

At this moment, there are only two clear thoughts in my mind:

Should I take a photo or video to post on my Moments?

Should I call the customer service to complain?

At that moment, the young man wearing the monocle points to the side of the building and says, “Wait another minute, my car is parked there.”

As he speaks, he takes out his phone and waves it.

“Huh?” I still don’t understand what’s happening.

The young man presses the edge of his monocle and smiles.

“I did something in the nearby alley just now. I couldn’t drive through, and the distance to walk here was a little far, so I rented a shared bike.

“I’m sorry, please wait a minute or two.”

Since the other party has already said so and I’m not in a rush. I politely reply, “It’s fine.”

The young man immediately puts away his phone and rode his bicycle to the side of the building.

Soon, a white car drives over and stops in front of me.

“Alright, you can board it now.” The car window rolls down, revealing the face with the monocle.

Just as I’m about to open the car door, I suddenly realize a problem:

The car displayed on the app is black!

Uh… I’m just about to walk to the back to look at the car plate when the driver waves his phone at me across the passenger seat.

“I have two cars.

“I’m driving this car today, but I bound my account to the other one.

“Look, my phone is right.”

With that, he calls me.

Seeing that the number displayed isn’t a problem, and considering how I’ve encountered similar situations before, I’m relieved. I open the car door and get in.

It’s broad daylight in a bustling city. What is there to be afraid of?

However, the reviewing and verifications undertaken by the platform are really problematic.

When I get into the car, the driver with a monocle looks ahead as he picks up a cigarette box and hands it back.

“Want a cigarette?”

“Isn’t smoking banned?” I blurt.

“As long as I don’t mind it.” The thin driver smiles through the rearview mirror.

“I don’t smoke.” I instinctively shake my head.

The driver holds the steering wheel with one hand, not really paying attention to the situation on the road.

“It’s good that you don’t smoke. I don’t smoke either. Smoking causes one to have a ghastly appearance.”

“Then why do you have cigarettes…” I follow up quickly.

As the car drives down the road, the driver uses his empty hand to touch the monocle on his right eye.

“There will always be some friends you need to meet despite you being unwilling to meet.”

“That’s true.” I nod.

At this moment, I recall Vice President Wu from the company next door. Although he smokes, his appearance is definitely not ghastly. However, there's no need to say it out loud. I'm not someone who gets into debates with others in a professional manner.

"You don't look like a rideshare driver." I glance at the obviously expensive cigarettes, and glance around the luxurious interior of the car.

"Heh heh," the driver replies with a smile. "Is my performance that obvious?"

"You don't look like you make a living from ridesharing. You look like you come from a rich family." I give a random reason.

Either way, I can't tell.

"Heh heh, being born with a silver spoon doesn't bar me from making a living from ridesharing. It allows me to experience a completely different life from my past, and being able to see all kinds of unique people is a form of entertainment. Don't you find it interesting?" the driver says with a smile.

How philosophical… I nod and casually say, "That may be the case, but I think you occasionally only take a few ride orders and are usually busy with other things."

"Yes, I went to your building to investigate." The driver looks at the rearview mirror again, and his smile makes me feel a little strange.

"Investigate…" I'm at a loss.

"It's about an evil cult. They like to use vending machines to harm others." The corner of the driver's lips curls up.

…

If it wasn't for the fact that I already knew about it, I would've lost my composure!

"You're a private detective? Do you know a detective named Sherlock Moriarty? This might be his nickname." I suddenly have an idea.

The driver raises his hand to pinch the edge of his monocle and chuckles.

"Of course. We're old friends."

I don't know if it's my imagination, but I feel like he emphasized the words "old friend."

"D-did you, or any of you find anything?" I try my best to act like a bystander.

The driver half-turns his head to glance at me and says with an obvious smile, "Guess."

That's such a punchable smile… I rein in my emotions.

"I guess so."

“Then it’s as you say,” the driver says with an expression of “I know a lot, but I won’t tell you.”

“…” As I think about what to say, he suddenly straightens his back and looks ahead.

Then, he pushes the monocle on his right eye.

Suddenly, countless fragments appear in my mind.

Overlapping roads, tunnels, mixed colors, different signboards, pedestrians, cars that swept backwards rapidly…

They simultaneously explode in my mind at the same time, making me feel like I’m suffering from motion sickness.

“We’re here.” The driver’s voice enters my ears the next second.

I get out of the car in a daze and squat down at the side of the road, feeling like I might vomit at any moment.

I recover after a while, but the ridesharing car has already left.

Thinking back, I suddenly shudder.

The driver resembled the emoji that The Star had mentioned:

Chapter 1417: In Modern Day (15)

No way… Is the driver related to the monocle incident that The Star mentioned? He's been corrupted, or is he the source of corruption? Wait, why did I use the word "corruption"… At that moment, I feel like my heart stopped beating for two seconds.

I forget my stupor as I quickly check my belongings.

My phone is still here!

My keys are still here!

My travel card is still here!

My seven yuan change is still here!

My shoes are still here, my pants are still here, my clothes are still here, and my body is still here!

Phew… I didn't lose anything. Nothing happened… I heave a sigh of relief. I feel as though I was just overthinking things.

People just love to scare themselves.

Since I've already taken out my phone, I take a look at the time.

3:25 p.m.

That driver drove really fast—five to six minutes earlier than the estimated time on the app. No wonder I got motion sickness… I gain a new understanding of the situation.

So that's what happened!

However, I keep having the feeling as though I wasn't in the car for more than fifteen minutes, and that we didn't exchange many words.

Maybe it was due to the motion sickness I experienced towards the end of my journey, probably… I raise my head, get my bearings, and head for the eye-catching police station.

It's a compound with several buildings inside. Two fully armed police officers stand guard at the entrance.

At this moment, I suddenly think of a problem. I connect it to a question from my prior inspection of my personal belongings.

I didn't bring a paper notebook or pen!

Of course, this isn't a result of my negligence. It's just that I'm used to using my cell phone to record matters. If it were something grander in scale, or in a more professional setting, I would bring a notebook computer. I haven't used a paper notebook in the last two years.

Uh, in a work environment like a police station, the leaders in charge of matters definitely can't stand the situation of someone holding a cell phone and tapping on it during business exchanges. That's not polite at all! When dealing with them, it's better to be more conservative and traditional. Hmm, I'll first find a *stationery shop, buy a pen, buy a notebook, and then go in. Heh heh, in a business environment, putting on an act is also a skill…* I immediately look around to find my target.

At times like this, I'll always praise my habit of leaving some buffer time. This gives me enough time to not be in a rush, and allows me to be calm.

The leader in charge of the project and I agreed to meet at 4:00 p.m., so I have 35 minutes of spare time.

Normally speaking, taking a taxi from the company to this place would take about 20 minutes. With the series of actions like going downstairs, waiting for the ride, and entering the compound, the total time required is about 35 minutes. I set off at 3:00 p.m., giving myself plenty of buffer time to arrive at the scheduled time of 3.45 p.m., but considering the possibility of traffic jams, registrations, inspections, and unknown accidents, I ultimately scheduled the appointment to be at 4:00 p.m.

To my surprise, the driver with the monocle drove so fast that I arrived ahead of time.

I don't find any stationery stores despite looking around. I hurriedly take out my phone and use the map app to search for a nearby store.

The nearest stationery store is two kilometers away… Get a rideshare to go over? Just as I'm hesitating, I suddenly see a small shop on the opposite side of the road.

"Star Dream Provisions Store."

Provisions store… maybe there’s stationery… I’ll go take a look first. There’s no need to get a rideshare… Heh, Star Dream. It feels like a celebrity management agency… I quickly make up my mind and quicken my pace. Taking advantage of the flashing green light, I cross the pedestrian crossing.

Soon, I arrive at the Star Dream Provisions Store.

The restaurant is very cramped, and the lighting isn’t good. It’s rather dim inside, giving me the feeling of going from afternoon to evening instantly.

Lining both sides of the store are shelves that are about 1.8 meters tall. The items placed on the shelves are dazzling, but they all look rather strange.

The cashier is right at the back where a woman in a black dress sits at the back. She has her back against two wooden cabinets and is facing a tablet computer. She’s playing with her phone.

There’s an ancient serial drama playing on the tablet computer, adding a bit of life to the dark shop. However, it’s obvious that the cashier is only listening to the sounds with zero concern about the content.

This store’s design is illogical, and the boss isn’t meticulous. If I were a thief, I could take a few items and turn around to leave. She wouldn’t be able to discover it at all… I lampoon silently before walking to the cashier and rap the wooden counter thrice.

“Hello, do you have a notebook and pen? I’m referring to a paper notebook.”

The woman in a black dress looks up and replies with a smile, “Yes, we do. Over there.”

Her voice is very gentle, calming me down instantly. Her looks are pretty good. Even the dark environment can’t mask her beauty.

Without taking another look, I trace the shop owner’s finger and look towards the corner of the third rack of the shelf on the right.

There is something that appears to be a notebook there, but its design is very strange, as if it’s made of brass pages.

“This is a notebook?” I reach for the brass book.

It feels cold to the touch, as if it’s made of metal. However, there is indeed paper inside.

“Yes.” The shop owner in a black dress says with a calm smile, “My shop’s theme is ‘mystery.’ All the products in this area have this characteristic.”

Product differentiation strategy… This phrase flashes across my mind.

At the same time, I survey my surroundings and see an antique quill, a silver mirror with black eyeballs on both sides, and a few dice of different shapes—too many to count.

Mirror… I subconsciously pick up the mirror with my other hand.

I want to confirm my current condition. I can’t look terrible just because of my motion sickness and have it affect the business exchange later.

The mirror quickly reflects my face:

Black hair, brown eyes, deep facial features, hard lines…

Damn, when did I become so handsome? I can’t believe that I’m the one in the mirror!

After being stunned for two seconds, I quickly put down the brass notebook, take out my phone, and use the screen to examine myself.

This is very normal. It’s still my original appearance… I turn my head to look at the mirror again. I’m still very handsome in the mirror.

“…What’s going on with this mirror?” I can’t help but ask.

The woman in the black dress smiles.

“This is a smart mirror.”

“Ah, I understand.” I suddenly understand.

It’s a smart mirror with its own beautifying features, filters, and Photoshop effects!

To put it simply, it’s actually a special tablet that’s directly connected to TikTok and BeautyCam apps.

With this in mind, I lose interest and immediately place the mirror back in its original position.

For some reason, I feel like the mirror is a little sticky. I use a lot of strength to retract my hand.

“How much is this notebook? And this quill.” I don’t waste any time. I pick up the brass notebook again and ask for the price.

The boss in a black dress purses her lips and chuckles.

“Ten million.”

Pfft… I almost spit on her face.

“The two of these are antiques,” the boss added.

“… Is there anything that isn’t an antique? Something more normal?” I take a deep breath and ask directly.

“Yes.” The woman in the black dress points behind me.

I turn around and see a black, ordinary notebook.

I pick it up and flip through it. I’m certain that the surface of the notebook is made of hard paper. The paper inside is an imitation of goatskin. One of the pages is painted with The Fool, who's wearing gorgeous clothes and dazzling head accessories.

With The Fool as my online nickname, how can I not recognize The Fool?

“How much is it?” I ask casually.

“30 yuan,” the boss replies with a good attitude.

“It's a little expensive. What about this pen?” I casually pick up another dark red, classic fountain pen.

“25 yuan. If you buy both of them, you can have them for 50 yuan,” the boss in the black dress says with a smile.

I hesitate for a few seconds and feel that 50 yuan isn't an unacceptable price compared to traveling two kilometers by taxi—not only is it a waste of time, but the transport cost would be around 20 yuan. Including the cost of the notebook and pen, it would be about 30 to 40 yuan.

“Okay.” I take out my phone and complete the transaction.

After leaving the Star Dream Provisions Store and returning to the police station, I register at the guard house.

During this process, a police car drives out.

“Is there an emergency mission?” the policeman on duty asks.

While waiting for the barrier to rise, the driver replies indifferently, “Damn it, a car thief appeared. He stole two sedan cars!”

Chapter 1418: In Modern Day (16)

Stole two sedan cars in a row… This is probably a crime syndicate. How can one person drive two cars? I can't help but mutter inwardly.

This is the cultivation I've gone through as a fan of courtroom dramas and detective series, as well as me being a loyal reader of crime deduction novels.

Of course, I don't say it out loud. I believe that people with standard intelligence can come to a similar conclusion.

When the guard on duty calls to confirm my identity, I take out my phone and check the time.

There's more than enough time… I let out a sigh of relief as I unhurriedly circle around the pond in the middle of the courtyard and enter the building facing the main entrance.

After I run through the possible exchange in my mind, I knock on the door of the target's office three minutes early.

"Please come in." A mellow voice sounds from inside.

"O-Officer Deng…" As soon as I push open the door and enter, I realize that the officer sitting behind the desk is the one who had come to check on my residence permit!

I always imagined that he's a police officer at the police station, but I never expected him to have an office at the Municipal

Public Security Bureau. He even has the room to himself!

“You are?” Officer Deng raises his hand to comb his receding hairline and asks with a puzzled look, “Do we know each other?”

“Last night, you checked on my residence permit and reminded me of a mysterious cult. Later, we met again in Lawson. I even reported a woman suspected to be a member of the cult.” I begin to suspect that the person in front of me is Officer Deng’s biological brother, but I still give the details.

Officer Deng is enlightened.

“Zhou-Zhou Mingrui, right?

“I’m face-blind, and I don’t have a good memory. It was night, so I couldn’t see clearly.”

I don’t need you to tell me that your memory isn’t good or how you have face-blindness. I can tell… I politely smile.

“Today, I’m representing the Intis Group to take over the previous project.”

“Yes, we agreed to meet at four.” Officer Deng points at the chair opposite his desk.

I immediately approach it and plan on placing the black notebook that I just bought on the table. I will then flip it to the middle—I can’t let Officer Deng notice that I just bought it and have never written on it.

Officer Deng glances at the notebook and frowns slightly.

Following that, he picks up the phone and dials an internal department number.

“Hey, the Intis Group is here. Come over for a meeting.”

After a simple briefing, he puts down the phone and smiles at me.

“This is an international collaboration project. We can’t decide on our own. Yes, the other party’s representative will be here soon.”

“I’m aware of that.” I’ve read the relevant documents in the morning and know what’s going on.

Of course, even if I’m lazy and didn’t read it, I’ll still have given such an answer. I can’t let the partner I’m working with find out that I’m skiving and not doing my job well.

Not long after I sit down, I hear Officer Deng’s office door open.

I stand up politely and look back. I see an old man in a long black robe.

His hair is white, and the wrinkles at the edge of his eyes and mouth are deeply recessed. His dark red eyes appear slightly turbid.

A red moon pendant hangs on his chest. He looks like a priest from a cathedral.

A foreign priest… I nod with a smile, fully displaying my courtesy.

For some reason, I find this old man a little familiar, just like the first time I met Officer Deng.

Strange… Recently, I've been feeling sad for some inexplicable reason. Is this the after-effect of the Assassin beverage? I silently inhale and control my emotions.

At that moment, Officer Deng introduces, "Old Neil, an Interpol representative, a clergyman."

"Hello, Mr. Neil." I quickly greet him.

Old Neil doesn't speak. He sizes me up and chuckles.

"Lad, have you been troubled by ghosts recently?"

…*You can tell?* I'm shocked. I don't know if I should admit it or hide it from a stranger.

"Don't lie. My eyes are very sharp." Old Neil smiles and points at his eyes.

"A little…" I mutter.

“Haha.” Old Neil immediately laughs. “You’re still too young. You confessed the moment I called you out. Actually, I’m not that sure. Yes, I’m a priest. I have the ability to expel wraiths and shadows. Do you need my help?”

…Is it okay to discuss such feudal superstitions in front of a police officer? I open my mouth, speechless.

Old Neil walks to Officer Deng’s table and very naturally picks up the coffee can on it.

“Don’t worry. I don’t charge much. If you’re still a believer of the Goddess, I can even do it for free.”

I wasn’t a believer of the Goddess in the past, but I am now! At this moment, my heart is palpitating.

I hesitate for two seconds before sighing.

“But, I’ve already found a helper.”

“Who is it? There aren’t many people with such abilities. Most of them are cheats.” Old Neil skillfully brews his coffee and asks casually.

“…Daly, do you know her?” I ask hesitantly.

“Daly… Ah, then that’s fine.” Old Neil retracts his smile and asks, “Are you the representative of the Intis Group? Let’s begin.”

At the same time, Officer Deng shakes his head with a smile, looking helpless.

“You know Madam Daly?” I ask.

Old Neil sighs and points at Officer Deng.

“His fiancée.”

“Oh, oh…” *Everyone knows each other!* I can’t help but sigh.

This boosts my confidence in Madam Daly.

I stop chatting and begin communicating with Officer Deng and Old Neil about the project, taking note of their requests.

An hour passes.

“Yawn.” Old Neil stretches his back. “It’s finally over. These old bones of mine really can’t withstand the torment of such meetings. I no longer have the energy.”

With that said, he stands up and smiles at me and Officer Deng.

“It’s time for me to retire.

“It’s time for me to leave. I’ll go to a faraway village. I’ll grow some flowers, feed the chickens, and play the piano for my wife. I don’t have to worry about things here anymore.”

Officer Deng stands up as well. As he sends Old Neil out, he smiles and says, “Let’s go together.”

As I watch them leave, I suddenly feel speechless.

Chapter 1419: In Modern Day (17)

It's not even 5:30, and I can get off work normally again! I've already composed myself by the time when I walk out of the police station, feeling happy that I don't have to work overtime today.

Before I left in the afternoon, I communicated with the administration department and was told that I didn't need to return to the company. After all, we didn't know how long the meeting would take.

What if Officer Deng got me to stay for dinner, sing some karaoke, and enjoy a spa, right?

Although the probability of this happening is low, even if it wouldn't happen to me, I still have to be prepared.

The distance from the old estate where my rented apartment is to the police station is shorter than it is from my company, but I still chose to take public transport, because the company doesn't reimburse the transportation fees for returning home.

Metro line 3,600 meters... Bus 72, 150 meters... I take out my phone and search for a route home.

After careful consideration, I choose to take the bus.

The weather is hot in the summer, so it's best if I can minimize the steps taken.

As I wait at the bus stop for the bus, I can't help but doubt my life.

I'm already a real, powerful, and extraordinary assassin. Why do I have to live like a slave of society?

But I can't get any money without work.

Assassins also need to save money to buy a house, food, and clothes!

Sigh, at times like this, it should be like a game. Give me an assassin manager and help me gather missions. After confirming how evil my target is, I'll shave my head and flash through the crowd. No, being bald is too ugly. Forget it...

What can I do?

Record videos of extreme sports?

I still have to practice and learn. I've never paid attention to it before...

Actually, I can consider joining the police academy. As an assassin, I'm capable of capturing thieves and scammers. I won't disappoint with my abilities. The only problem is that I've heard that a policeman's income isn't too high.

Perhaps it's better after the probation period?

As I seriously consider the future, I board the bus. I hold the handle and notebook with one hand, and I pull out my phone with the other.

I'm a refined person. I definitely won't blast out any sounds in public. I don't have wireless earphones, so I can only browse Weibo and HUPU, an online sports community website.

As the bus drives, it suddenly stops. The driver's voice sounds from the speaker.

"Get off the bus. There's a malfunction. Wait for the next one."

The passengers curse as they get out of the bus. I'm among them as I sigh at my bad luck today.

There's only one stop left. There's no need to wait. I'll just walk back. I open the map app and confirm my current location.

If I knew this would happen, I might as well have taken the subway!

I follow the GPS—walking straight, taking a bend, crossing the street—to the old estate I live in.

At this moment, I see a five or six-year-old girl jump out from the roadside, and an SUV is speeding over.

"…" I'm stunned at first, but then I realize that I'm an assassin, an expert that surpasses ordinary people.

Without any hesitation, I run towards the girl.

Seeing that I might not make it in time, I exert strength into my legs and kick out, relying on my assassin’s ability to unleash all of my strength in one strike to pounce forward.

During this process, I feel like a sharp arrow that had been shot from a bow.

In the blink of an eye, I lunge for the little girl and hug her.

Then, I straighten my back and quickly adjust my body structure, making myself as light as a feather.

The SUV finally stops. I take a few steps to the side and steady myself.

To be honest, I was hit, but because I made myself seemingly weightless, I didn’t suffer any damage.

“Are you alright?” The SUV driver gets out of the car and frantically asks.

His face is drenched in sweat.

“I’m fine. It was a close one.” I put down the dazed little girl and pat her shoulder.

She has long, jet-black hair which makes her qualified to be a model in a shampoo commercial.

“That’s good, that’s good.” The SUV driver is relieved to see that I didn’t dirty or injure myself.

At this moment, a middle-aged man rushes out from the side of the road.

When he sees that the little girl is fine, he's obviously relieved.

His skin is bronze in color and he has soft facial features. He has a pair of eyes that are closer in color to brown. They appear to have been through a lot.

“Thank you, thank you. Are you okay?” he asks, concerned.

“No, my luck isn't bad. I just happened to avoid the collision,” I reply with a smile, inexplicably in a good mood.

I've finally used the ability belonging to an assassin.

The SUV driver points at his license plate.

“Contact me if you have any problems. I still have something to do, so I'll be leaving first.”

The middle-aged man nods before saying to me,

“Why don't you come to my shop to have a drink to calm yourself down?”

For some reason, I feel a sense of closeness with him. And since it's free, I don't reject him.

"Okay."

As I speak, I pick up the black notebook.

After leaving the road and passing through the non-motorcar lane, I see this gentleman's shop.

This is a themed bookstore. It's renovated to look like a coffee shop. The other door leads to a nearby park with a wooden swing hanging on it.

"Don't wander around in the future. It's very dangerous. Come on, thank Uncle." The bookstore owner pulls the little girl over.

"Call me Brother. Don't make me sound so old," I joke.

"Thank you, Brother." The little girl follows his instructions.

Without waiting for my reply, she cleverly says, "Then my father is your elder!"

Damn, did I just get taken advantage of… I can only smile helplessly.

The bookstore owner immediately asks, "What would you like to drink?"

"A cold beverage would do." I'm not a picky eater.

“Okay.” The bookstore owner points at the surrounding bookshelves and says, “You can also pick a book to read.”

“Okay.” As he mixes the cold beverage, I curiously walk to the bookshelf to see what’s on it.

Groselle’s Travels

Book of Secrets

Roselle and his 100 Mistresses

The Self-Cultivation of Evil Gods

How to Make the Believers Offer Money

What kind of books are these? I’m stunned as I read them. Finally, I choose the seemingly normal Groselle’s Travels.

Just as I find a seat and sit down, the bookstore owner walks over with a glass.

The drink is brownish-red in color, and there’s quite a few pieces of ice in it. After drinking it in one gulp, it’s slightly sour and sweet. It’s cold and very refreshing. Great for the summer.

“Not bad,” I praise.

The boss doesn’t say anything else and returns to the cashier.

I then leisurely lean back in my chair and flip through Groselle's Travels. From time to time, I take a mouthful of the cold beverage, feeling very pleased.

After a while, the girl runs to the back door and shouts, "Daddy, Daddy, I want to sit on the swing."

The bookstore owner sighs and walks over with a smile.

I smile and take another sip of my drink. I can't help but sigh.

An afternoon like this is really nice…

Chapter 1420: In Modern Day (18)

Having had half a day to spare, I stay in the bookstore until it's almost seven.

During this time, I can't refuse the owner's repeated offers. I reluctantly take a small slice of lemon cake, a set of pasta with minced meat, and two grilled sausages that had been battered and fried with spicy chicken powder.

I don't need dinner… I rub my belly and decide to take a walk home.

This helps with digestion.

The only problem is that the weather is hot and stuffy. If I walk in this weather for a while, I'll definitely sweat.

However, ever since I entered society, I've always had the habit of taking a shower everyday. And today, I'm also preparing to wash some clothes, so I'm not too averse to sweating.

To my surprise, perhaps because of the Assassin beverage, I managed to passively lose weight. I don't even have a tummy. Furthermore, I'm good at using the shadows to hide myself. When I return to my rented apartment, I've only sweated a fifth of what I expected.

That medium lady, Madam Daly, will be here at nine. There's still about two hours left. With more than enough time, I decide to use the fan after my shower, and to play some games.

As for using the air conditioner, the weather isn't too hot. Besides, after becoming an Assassin, I feel that I have a strong tolerance for heat and stuffy conditions.

To be honest, this cannot be considered unbearable. It's just that I don't really feel that hot and stuffy.

When I enter the bathroom, I glance at the mirror and suddenly think of a question:

That female ghost was introduced by Detective Sherlock Moriarty to protect me and investigate that mysterious cult. She hasn't shown any intention of harming me. Should I remind her that I've found a medium, so she should hide in advance?

She doesn't have any ill intentions. She's very friendly. Besides, my reason for dealing with that mysterious cult is reasonably convincing… She must've sensed Madam Daly's power last night. Even if I don't tell her, she should be able to guess what will happen next… I think for a moment and make up my mind.

However, a new problem rears its head:

How should I warn her?

I don't even know where she is or how I should contact her!

Looking around, I can't find any clues. It seems like I'm the only person in the room.

Uh, yes, there's only one person, but who knows if there are any ghosts.

Perhaps she's hiding somewhere and I can just talk to the air? It's rather silly talking to myself... I recall last night and cast my gaze back at the mirror.

Looking at my reflection in the mirror, I whisper, "I've hired a medium. She'll be here at nine."

As soon as I finish speaking, the mirror in front of me turns dark, as if the surrounding light had been sucked in.

The pale female ghost wearing a small bonnet and a retro dress appears in the mirror and nods gently.

"Thank you."

In a second, her image disappears and the mirror returns to normal.

I heave a sigh of relief and hang up my clothes before I start to take a shower.

As I shower, I suddenly freeze.

Since the female ghost has already left, why am I spending so much money to hire a medium?

The female ghost clearly has no ill intentions, and she's even secretly protecting me. Why would I spend so much money to hire a medium?

That's 20,000 yuan, with a maximum of 50,000!

Wouldn't that be a waste of money?

While taking pity on my wallet, I feel the need to think of a way to cancel the contract.

Anyways, it's still early. As long as Madam Daly doesn't live in the suburbs, she probably hasn't set off yet.

But I can't be sure that the female ghost doesn't have any ill intentions… In my hesitation, I wipe myself dry and put on my clothes.

After careful consideration, I decided to use the strategy of delaying things to hold back on the exorcism assignment.

During this process, if I discover something amiss, I'll immediately get Madam Daly to come over!

Sigh, it's really embarrassing to break a contract… I return to my room, pick up my phone, and send a message to SleepingWithCorpses.

"Madam Daly, the ghost that is haunting me seems to have left."

This is the truth, but I didn't explain why.

"Indeed…" After more than ten seconds, Madam Daly replies, "Could it be that the restrictions I did last night scared her away? Or maybe you were too much of a pervert and scared her away. Didn't I ask you to watch 'A Chinese Ghost Story' and learn how to interact with female ghosts?"

I feel that it's more likely that 'A Chinese Ghost Story' will make the female ghost shy… I didn't dare reply as I cautiously say,

"I don't know.

"How about this? Don't come over today. I'll keep an eye out for a few more days. If the female ghost really doesn't appear again, then forget it. If there's any problem, I'll let you know again. How about that?"

After some hesitation, I add, "I can reimburse you for your preparations. No, I mean pay a reasonable fee."

"Let's do this for now. I thought I could catch a female ghost and play with it." Madam Daly sends an emoji.

Hearing this, I relax. I feel like I've earned a huge sum of money.

After settling this matter, I happily play games.

At eleven o'clock, I decided to go downstairs to buy some delicious food to reward myself as I didn't spend any money for dinner and didn't have to pay for the exorcism.

"Eggplants, I have to have roasted eggplants…" I mutter as I rush out of the estate.

Before I can choose the barbecue stall, I see those punks again.

Among them, the hooligan nicknamed "Dani" is seriously handing out flyers.

His dyed, charred-yellow hair, eyebrows, and his introduction of the description of tutoring class form a strong contrast.

This tutoring class is interesting… I glance around and see an acquaintance sitting at the barbecue stall on the right.

Miss Bernie Huang!

How is a rich young lady like her eating at a roadside barbecue stall? Does CEO Huang know? I casually size up Miss Huang's companion.

If it was a guy, hehe, that would be amazing gossip!

Uh, a girl wearing black-framed glasses. She's not too old, about the same age as Miss Huang… I feel full of regret and was about to retract my gaze.

At this moment, Miss Huang raises her head and looks over.

At this moment, our eyes meet.

She immediately stands up and walks towards me.

This is a little awkward… However, there's nothing to feel awkward about. I live nearby, so what's wrong with coming out to eat some barbecue? I stand my ground and wait for Miss Huang and her friend to come over.

Miss Huang stops in front of me and tersely acknowledges my presence.

“I have something I need your help with.”

The girl in black-framed glasses beside her asks curiously, “Father, who is he?”

Pfft… What kind of address is that? The relationship between youngsters nowadays is so complicated… I’m actually at a loss as to how to respond. I can only force the corners of my mouth to curl up as I express my doubts with a smile.

“We had a bet in our dorm. Whoever lost had to address the winner as father,” Miss Bernie Huang explains.

She points at the girl beside her.

“Her family runs a tutoring class.

“I would like you to register for the Dream Tutoring Classes and sit in for their classes.

“I’ll pay for it. I’ll also pay you a fee for the work you do later.”

Register for the tutoring class… I can’t help but turn my head to look at the hooligans who are seriously handing out flyers.

Chapter 1421: In Modern Day (19)

“Why don’t you sign up for it yourself?” I don’t really want to get involved in Miss Huang’s matters.

On the one hand, CEO Huang is both a playboy, but he also has a daughter complex. His thoughts go astray the moment he sees any man getting close to Miss Huang. Alarm bells would go off in his head and he would overreact. Considering how it’s a rather good source of income for me, I don’t want to lose my job over this. Yes, although I’ve been working overtime for quite a while, I’m still paid enough for overtime work. CEO Huang has always been generous in terms of remuneration.

On the other hand, attending a tutoring class is so troublesome. If I have the time, wouldn’t it be better to spend my time on something else?

Of course, if it’s just to scout for information, and I don’t have to spend my own money, then I can do anything I like while attending the class as long as it doesn’t affect the students around me.

Miss Bernie Huang points at the girl in black-framed glasses and says, “Her family’s company and this company are competitors, and they know each other. Regardless of whether it’s her or her staff at the tutoring center, they definitely won’t be able to sign up for it.”

“You can...” I discover a blind spot.

Miss Huang shakes her head.

“I can’t either.”

“The boss and part-time lecturer of this tutoring center knows me.”

“You’re kidding?” I subconsciously ask.

Miss Huang glances at the group of hooligans who are handing out flyers and says, “She’s Uncle Ai’s granddaughter.”

Director Ai? I laugh.

“This is friendly fire—conflicts arising between people on the same side.”

Without waiting for Miss Huang and her “daughter” to speak, I sincerely give a suggestion:

“To be honest, why do you need someone to attend their tutoring classes?

“You can all work together.

“Everyone can establish an indirect relationship. You invest in me, and I’ll invest in you. Wouldn’t a merger be better?

“Only by becoming larger and stronger will you be able to fight against other tutoring center chains!”

With that said, I silently apologize.

Sorry, I've been reading more business reports recently.

"I'll consider that. However, we have to first grasp the style and quality of their tutoring classes before we can talk about anything else," Miss Huang replies in a business-like manner.

This is the result of an in-home upbringing… I sigh inwardly and casually say,

"Then you can find a random passerby."

"They aren't trustworthy. I still have to do background checks. It's too expensive to find a professional company. The cost is too high," Miss Huang answers the questions that I haven't even thought of.

She continues, "You don't need to attend the classes often. You just need to attend four to five lessons. After that, it will be up to your own preferences."

Four to five lessons, which means one or two weekends. I'll treat it as overtime… I hesitate for a moment before saying, "I'll ask."

Miss Huang and the girl in black-framed glasses immediately replies, "Thank you."

I then walk towards the group of hooligans and stop in front of the guy whose hair and eyebrows are dyed a charred-yellow.

Dani... This definitely isn't a proper nickname. It's best that I don't address him like that, lest we fight on the spot... Although I'm already an Assassin and am unparalleled, there's no need for that... I cough lightly and say, "What are the fees like for the tutoring classes?"

The hooligan with the yellowish eyebrows looks at me with a happy expression and says, "It depends on the situation. For example, what kind of class you'll be taking? Is it an evening class, weekend class, or classes during the daytime? All of them have different prices.

"Also, what do you primarily want to learn? Foreign languages, mathematics, Chinese, history? Or everything? And what level are you at?"

Of course, it has to be weekend classes. I usually don't have time. I'm dead tired after work every day. I just want to have some fun... Considering how I had to receive a foreign VIP previously, I reply, "Weekend class, foreign languages, more verbal in style, adult standards. It's best to be more business-oriented."

"Sure, no problem." The hooligan nicknamed "Dani" turns over the flyer in his hand and hands it to me. "Weekend business English classes, 8,888 yuan a semester..."

He rambles on.

"I'll consider it." I take the flyer and say, "When can I sign up?"

"The registration period is currently underway. There are discounts for registering now. It only costs 6,666... The location is the address on the flyer. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the morning," Dani" introduces in detail.

“Is that so…” I look around and casually ask, “This is the first time I’ve seen people handing out flyers at night. Don’t you guys have time to rest?”

“We have to wait for the barbecue anyway, so we’re just handing out flyers while we wait. Moreover, the foot traffic is the highest here at night,” “Dani” explains indifferently.

“I see.” I ask, “What’s your name? Do I need to mention your name when signing up?”

I would like to confirm if they get any commissions from successfully recruiting students when handing out flyers.

“No need. There’s no need.” Dani shakes his head in a slight daze.

“You don’t get any commissions? All you do is hand out flyers?” I press in puzzlement.

Isn’t this too professional?

Besides, as a hooligan, what isn’t better than handing out flyers?

Upon hearing my words, Dani is taken aback. He smiles and says, “My main job is being a tutor at the tutoring center.

“I teach foreign languages.”

“…” At this moment, I feel that this tutoring center is a little unreliable.

It was at this time that their barbecue was done. The other hooligans stop handing out flyers and walk towards the stall.

Dani panics.

“Sh*t!

“Wait for me.”

As he runs to the barbecue stall, he turns around and says to me, “My surname is Da.

“Call me Teacher Da!”

The accent of the foreign language sounds quite authentic… I shake my head and return to another barbecue stall to find Miss Huang and her dormitory daughter.

“I’ll go take a look this weekend,” I say simply.

“How much is it?” the girl in black-framed glasses asks.

“They claim that there’s a discount. 6,666.” I don’t hide anything.

Miss Huang nods.

“Perhaps there are other small expenses. I’ll give you a total of twenty thousand. The rest will be considered your hire fee.”

No, I don't need that much… I originally wanted to modestly decline, but Miss Huang offered just too much.

"Okay," I exhale.

"Add me on WeChat, I'll transfer it to you." Miss Huang takes out her phone.

Just as I'm about to "Scan" her QR code, I suddenly think of a problem.

"Why don't you transfer it to her, and then she'll transfer it to me?"

The "she" refers to Miss Huang's dormitory daughter.

"Huh?" Miss Huang is a little confused.

"If CEO Huang finds out that you transferred money to me privately, it would be a little troublesome…" I say after some deliberation.

When that happens, not only will I lose my job, I might even get run over by CEO Huang's car.

"Alright." Miss Huang tilts her head and says to the girl in black-framed glasses, "Catie, add him and transfer 20,000 to him."

The girl obviously knows that Miss Bernie Huang has astonishing wealth and isn't worried that she would default on any debts.

She takes out her phone and adds me on WeChat.

Catie Huang… The name sounds like that of a family member… I glance at the girl’s WeChat name and mutter to myself.

After collecting the money, I point to the side.

“I’ll be buying some barbecue.”

“Shall we eat together?” Miss Huang invites.

“No, no need.” I’m very timid.

At this moment, Catie Huang—the student in black-framed glasses, takes out two bags of snacks.

“Thank you for your help. This is a specialty of my tutoring center.”

“What are these?” I glance at the two bags of snacks.

“Dried mushrooms. It’s not worth much. It’s made by a biology teacher under our employ. His family farms mushrooms,” Catie Huang explains.

“Alright then, thank you.” Since it isn’t anything valuable, I accept it without qualms.

However, the black things in the snack bag gives me the nagging feeling that they’re poisonous.

Chapter 1422: In Modern Day (20)

“Looks delicious,” I politely say after retracting my gaze from the dried mushrooms.

Then, I bid farewell to Bernie Huang and Cattie Huang and go to the barbecue stall that I frequently dine at.

It still isn’t the time when the nightwalkers are most active. The small tables placed on the streets are a lot emptier. I easily occupy one of them and shout at the boss:

“I’d like to place my order!”

The boss focuses on grilling the skewers, completely unperturbed. The lady boss walks over with a small notebook and a ballpoint pen.

Without exchanging pleasantries or any small talk, I directly say, “Ten sticks of pork belly, ten sticks of pork ribs, five sticks of chicken skin, one set of chives, and one eggplant.”

The beef kebabs and lamb skewers at this barbecue stall aren’t very good, so I didn’t order them.

Of course, the amount of food I ordered has already exceeded my initial expectations, but it doesn’t matter. Not only did I save tens of thousands of dollars from the exorcism today, but I even earned more than 10,000 yuan from Miss Huang.

I have to treat myself!

As a normal person, after ordering so many meat dishes, I should always have some vegetarian dishes. I need to balance my diet with some greens. As for eggplants, I don't view them as vegetables. They transcend the concept of vegetables and meat dishes, and are unique existences in the barbecue world.

Sigh, Miss Huang is really generous. If I wasn't worried that CEO Huang would overreact, I would really like to add her on WeChat and ask her to trouble me more often. If there are any commissions, then just hand them to me. Of course, I can't take on things that are illegal and matters that go below the neck… I watch as the lady boss returns to the grill and repeats what I had just ordered.

Looking around, I notice that the other tables are occupied by groups of twos or threes. There are also people like me who eat barbecue alone, but they choose to have it "to go," so as to eat it at home.

Hmm, it's good to have more people. That will allow us to eat a greater variety of food. We can even have a few drinks… I ponder for a while and feel that I should get someone to join me.

Then, I suddenly think of a suitable candidate:

Peng Deng!

My childhood friend Peng Deng who lives nearby!

Without hesitation, I take out my phone and send him a WeChat message:

"Come out for barbecue!"

With my understanding of this fellow, he definitely won't let go of the opportunity to rip me off.

However, Peng Deng doesn't reply to my message.

He's in a ranked game? I randomly guess the reason for this and start thinking about who else I could invite.

In this city, I don't only have Peng Deng as a friend, but the rest of them live quite far away. It doesn't seem like a good idea to get someone to take a taxi all the way here to eat barbecue at around eleven in the evening. After all, I don't have anything to discuss with them, and I didn't make an appointment beforehand.

It might be better to just eat by myself… I stand up and prepare to go to the nearby FamilyMart, Lawson, or a local mini-mart to buy some drinks.

How can I not have cold drinks with barbecue?

A few years ago, when the roadside stalls weren't under strict supervision, there was usually a mobile ice box placed beside these barbecue stalls. Then, they would lay some cables to siphon off electricity from somewhere to sell iced beer and various cold beverages. Not only was it convenient for customers, but they could also earn some extra money.

Unfortunately, it's difficult for such situations to happen now, unless it's a barbecue shop with a shop front.

Looking around, I decide to head to the nearest local mini-mart.

“Boss, help me watch my seat. I’m going to buy some drinks.” I inform the lady boss, worried that there wouldn’t be a place to sit when I return later.

“Okay.” The lady boss isn’t worried that I would run away. My order is still being roasted. Even if I don’t want it anymore, there will still be many people who can have it.

When I’m almost at the entrance of the mini-mart, my phone vibrates.

Taking it out, I see that Peng Deng has finally replied:

“Don’t you have a nightlife?”

“Do you?” I respond reflexively.

“Of course. My girlfriend is at my place here today,” Peng Deng replies quickly.

Following that, he sends another message:

“Eating supper isn’t good for your health. Take it easy!”

“Bring your girlfriend along.” I emphasize, “I’m treating!”

“Ah, okay, we’ll be right there.” Peng Deng never needs to use transitional words in his speech.

"Hurry up. Also, what do you want to drink?" I ask.

Peng Deng doesn't reply immediately. He only sends a message after I enter the mini-mart.

"I'm not coming. My girlfriend says she's on a diet and doesn't eat supper."

"She already looks so thin, why would she need to go on a diet?" I think for a while and reply: "You can come alone."

Peng Deng sent ellipses:

"…

"She said that this is flaunting, a great insult towards her."

Tch! I despise this adulterous pair for two seconds before deliberately saying:

"Show me your masculinity!"

"…Alright, I'll show you my masculinity." Peng Deng replies quickly.

Oh, has the world turned upside down today? I'm stunned.

Then, Peng Deng sends a message:

“As a man, since I said I’m not coming, it means I’m not coming!”

“...” I’m speechless.

Putting my phone away, I head to the freezer and fridge to consider what to drink.

Frankly speaking, I don’t like alcohol, but it’s not that I can’t drink it; it’s just that I don’t like it and feel that it tastes bad.

Therefore, unless it’s a request from a friend, I won’t expressly buy alcohol.

In all these years, there are only two types of alcohol that suits my taste:

One is rice wine, and the other is ice wine.

The thing they have in common is...

Sweetness!

As my gaze shifts, I see a strange man.

He’s actually wearing a shirt, vest, suit, and pants in the middle of the night, as if he had just attended a business dinner.

This stands out in the stark contrast with a mini-mart or barbecue stall.

Oh, his eyes are red. He's quite handsome… I tsk and retract my gaze.

What does his attire have to do with me!?

At this moment, the young man walks over.

He hesitates for a moment before asking, “Hello, can you give me directions to the nearest hospital?”

“You don't know the way?” I'm surprised.

The man answers with hesitation, “I just moved here.”

“Oh.” I point to the door. “Turn right and walk straight when you're out. You'll be able to see the hospital when you turn right at the crossroads.”

“Thank you.” The man nods politely.

I don't watch him leave as I continue to lower my head and choose my drink.

After careful consideration, I buy a can of pineapple beer.

These beverages are divided into two types: one is pineapple-flavored beer, while the other is pineapple-flavored carbonated drinks which don't contain any alcohol. It only contains a slight beer taste to drive away the heat.

Without a doubt, I choose the latter.

After exiting the mini-mart and returning to the stall, I wait for a while longer before I finally see my barbecue.

Just as I'm about to enjoy it, a figure appears in front of me.

The red-eyed man in the three-piece suit walks over and politely asks,

"Hello, can you give me directions to the nearest hospital?"

"...You just asked me." I point that out.

The man seems to finally recognize me. His expression changes as he blurts out, "I'm lost again..."

Why are you saying "again?" I wonder.

Chapter 1423: In Modern Day (21)

Looking at the young man with bright red eyes, I snap to my senses. The first thought I have is:

What a waste of a handsome face!

After two seconds, I become somewhat worried.

Is this guy mentally challenged, or just simply mental?

Is he the type of person who easily loses his way to the point that a missing report pamphlet is handed out the very next day?

No, he answered me very fluently just now. He looks fine on the surface… Perhaps he's just bad with directions? Woah! How can someone like this be allowed outside the house on their own? I hesitate for a moment before asking, "Do you have your family's number? Do you need to give them a call?"

The man's expression instantly turns extremely ugly, giving off the feeling that he wants to bury his head in the ground.

"There's no need!" he answers firmly. "It was just a mistake. A mistake. I wasn't focused, as I was thinking about other problems."

"There's no need to explain," I immediately respond.

Trying to explain it just shows your attempts to hide things… I add inwardly.

Following that, I stand up, turn around, and point at the end of the road.

“Follow this path to the crossroads, then turn right, understand? Turn *right*.”

I move my right arm as I face the same direction as him.

The man gloomily says, “I’m not a juvenile.

“I’ll concentrate this time. There definitely won’t be a problem!”

I ignore his emphasis and instead remind him, “If you encounter any more accidents, you can look for the police.”

I originally wanted to mischievously say “Mr. Policeman,” but since he has already said that he isn’t a juvenile, I’ll just forget about it.

However, is this guy living in some stage play? His choice of words are quite literal!

Juvenile?

Using the term “primary school student” would be more down-to-earth!

The man falls silent for two seconds before taking a deep breath.

“Thank you.”

“You’re welcome.” I suppress my urge to make a joke.

After watching this guy walk far down the road, I sit back down and enjoy the barbecue.

I have to say that meat kebabs have to have fat in order to be delicious. Otherwise, they need to be marinated. Otherwise, it would definitely be dry, woody, and tasteless.

In this aspect, chicken skin is definitely the type of food that can take up the challenge. In my heart, it’s better than pork belly.

However, the chicken skin’s quality is hard to guarantee. Some barbecue stalls use the kind that were frozen for god knows how long. As for the one I chose, I can be quite certain of its standards.

I bite down on a piece of condiment-infused chicken skin that’s been coated with grease. Combined with a mouthful of pineapple and the chilling taste of beer, I find this summer evening simply wonderful in a way that cannot be described.

This pineapple beer isn’t bad. It’s refreshing and quenches my thirst… I’m completely engrossed in the food to the point that I even neglect my phone.

Meat, chives, eggplant, and an iced beverage. As I take in this assortment of delicacies, the food in front of me decreases.

Phew, nice… I rub my belly in satisfaction.

In the next second, I start to have regrets.

No, I have to control myself! What if I get fat!?

In the near future, I can only indulge myself once a month—no, once a week.

While I'm in a dilemma, I look up and see a figure.

He's wearing a three-piece attire that isn't suited to proper nightlife. He has two bright red eyes.

Almost at the same time, the figure seems to sense my gaze. He turns his head and casts his gaze at me.

Me: "…"

Him: "…"

*Why the f**k are you back?*

Don't tell me that you got lost?

The man stands by the roadside, neither advancing nor retreating. He seems to be embroiled in an intense inner struggle.

Uh… I look around, but I don't see any patrolling policemen.

I hesitate for a moment before standing up and walking towards the man.

I've already paid for the barbecue when the kebabs were delivered, so the lady boss doesn't stop me from leaving.

"Why don't I take you there?" I don't mention the fact that he's lost.

As a person, one has to know when to joke and when not to.

The man's expression changes. After a few seconds, he whispers, "Alright."

"Let's go." I turn and lead.

"Thank you…" The wind nearly scatters his voice from behind.

As I walk along the road to the crossroads, I casually chat.

"Which country are you from? You speak pretty good Mandarin."

"I'm a minority." The man hesitates for a moment before replying.

"Oh, no wonder. Which ethnic group are you from? How should I address you?" I'm enlightened.

The man walks to my side and falls silent for a moment before saying,

“My surname is Bai [1]. My name is Ailin.”

“It’s a nice name, just a little feminine,” I tease.

To be honest, a superficial joke like this definitely doesn’t match the sarcasm in my heart. I’ve already given Bai Ailin a feminine nickname in my mind:

Lin Lin, or Lyn Lyn.

Bai Ailin ignores my joke and walks forward before turning left.

“Wait. Wrong. That’s wrong. Over here.” I quickly correct him.

You really are a primary school student!

Bai Ailin immediately turns around and follows me to take the right turn.

I don’t look at his face, and I don’t say a word. I give him time to calm down, lest he gets angry.

To be honest, who gave him the courage to come out in the middle of the night to look for a hospital with such a terrible sense of direction?

Couldn't he just get a taxi?

Or let his parents accompany him!

After turning right, it's only a fifty to sixty-meter walk. The hospital appears before us.

"This hospital isn't big. This is the inpatient building. If you go straight ahead, you'll see the Emergency Department and the outpatient building. Do you need me to bring you there?"

"No need, I'm just going to the inpatient building." Bai Ailin is visibly relieved. "Thank you."

As he speaks, he takes out a simple brass key from his pocket.

Strange... People actually use a key like that in this day and age? In actuality, it just appears like that on the surface. It's essentially a smart key? I don't probe further and wave.

"Goodbye."

After walking for a few meters, I look back worriedly, only to find Bai Ailin gone.

I can no longer see him on this road. It's as if he vanished into thin air!

The hospital's side door didn't open either!

Could he have fallen into the sewers? I look over and realize that the manhole cover is fine.

Perhaps he used the key to open the door and enter… Heh heh, the old man guarding the side door must be asleep, right? I shake my head and stop thinking about this.

I head all the way home. I find myself feeling a little thirsty thanks to the barbecue, so I take out a cup from my room, open the fridge, and pour the cold water that has been chilled the entire day into the cup.

This is a habit of mine during the summer. Before I head out in the morning, I boil a pot of water, pour it into the large container, and place it in the fridge. I can then drink it after work.

Gulp! Gulp! Gulp… I drink two glasses in a row and finally feel fine.

After pouring another glass, I saunter back to my bedroom and sit at the computer table.

As I sweep my gaze, I suddenly sense something amiss.

Eh…

The black notebook I bought this afternoon is laying open.

I remember that before I went out for barbecue, it was clearly closed. Besides, I didn't open the windows for fear of mosquitoes!

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1. Literally “White” in Chinese Back.

Chapter 1424: In Modern Day (22)

Without the window being opened, the notebook flipped open by itself?

Did someone enter my room?

Or rather, is it a paranormal incident?

Erm, there's a ghost following me. It's normal to have paranormal incidents...

In that second, countless thoughts flash through my mind.

At the same time, I see a monster drawn on the page of the open notebook.

The monster is humanoid, but it's made of tiny squirming worms.

This sounds very bizarre and terrifying, but in reality, it feels nothing of the sort. This is because this drawing is very simple and crude. It resembles the random scribbling of a kindergarten child.

No way? Some brat entered my room? A relative of one of my flatmates? As I think about it, I pick up my notebook and flip through it quickly, searching for other traces.

After flipping through two pages, I see lines of text:

“My drawing expertise is really bad.

“The main problem isn’t me. I was once called a master artist.

“War is art! War is aesthetics!

“It’s like I’ve had a dream that I often had. The dream is filled with such strange languages.

“I’m such a decadent fellow!

“We really are women!”

…

These lines of text weren’t that difficult to read, but the things written down look very chaotic. It gives me a headache as I instinctively stop reading and close the notebook.

There’s a problem with this!

This is like an incantation for dark magic!

I’ve experienced quite a few things in the past two days. I barely managed to calm myself down as I cast my gaze towards the window.

On the glass window, the blonde female ghost that looks like she's cosplaying appears.

"Do you know who did it?" I ask in a suppressed voice.

"It was done by an evil spirit," the female ghost replies with an ethereal voice.

Evil spirit sounds more advanced than some spirit or poltergeist… As a modern youth who has played many foreign games and watched some foreign television series, I think the name sounds pretty cool.

"Er… Is an evil spirit more powerful?" I ask after some deliberation.

The female ghost nods her head in agreement.

"Will this be more troublesome?" I think of asking Madam Daly to exorcise the ghosts again, but I'm also worried that she won't be able to deal with ghosts at the level of evil spirits.

"I'm also an evil spirit," the female ghost says simply.

"…Okay." I don't know how to respond.

"W-what's that evil spirit's intention behind scrawling in my notebook?" It takes me a few seconds to recall the main purpose of my question.

The female ghost shakes her head.

"I don't know."

"…" I open my mouth and change the topic. "How should I address you?"

I can't just keep calling her female ghost, right? That's not polite.

"Sharron." After the female ghost says that, her figure gradually fades and disappears from the glass window.

Seeing that she's very calm and composed, I'm relieved. I tease myself, *It's a huge incident. There's no use panicking. Just focus on sleeping!*

Then I wash up and go to bed. It ends up being an uneventful night.

The next morning, I wake up on time as usual. I laze in bed for ten minutes and take my time to leave the house. On the way to the bus stop, I buy a burrito that can virtually wrap everything.

With the burrito in hand, I take the bus and arrive at the company. I sit in my seat, then I get some water from the water dispenser and get down to eating breakfast.

Sigh, if I hadn't treated myself last night, then I should be having a cup of sweet soy milk.

Thinking of sweet soy milk, I associate it with the new product that has just been released at the store I frequently buy from.

Salted soy milk!

This seems to be the unique way to eat in a few places. Soy milk with soy sauce added to it!

I don't know what it tastes like... I eat my breakfast seriously and start preparing for work.

At this moment, Rozanne, who is almost late, rushes in with a huge bag in her hand.

"Here, have some beverages. My treat," she says to everyone in the office.

She's a lady with good personal relations. Including me, most of the people stand up and surround her.

"What beverages are there?" I ask casually.

Rozanne puts down her bag and hands the bag to everyone.

"Aiya, I bought a lot of bottles to get what I wanted.

"They all have different flavors.

"*Sigh*, if you're alive, then you should have a gambler inside you!

"Come, let's see what I picked."

What in the world is she talking about?… I’m beginning to doubt Rozanne’s ability to express herself.

However, I still understood the last sentence. I quickly reach into the bag and take out a beverage.

I wonder what flavor it will be? Just as I have this thought, I see a familiar bottle design.

It’s a bottle formed by twisted snake-like patterns!

This is very similar to the Assassin beverage I drank before, but the color is a little different!

It was black before, but now it’s blue!

“…” I quickly turn the bottle around and see the name on the front:

Instigator

“Aren’t you going to drink it? You don’t like this? Why don’t you drink this last bottle instead?” Rozanne points at the last bottle in the bag, puzzled.

The beverage bottle is like a ball of extended flames. It’s very cool.

“No, I’m just thinking, I’m thinking…” I subconsciously refuse, searching for an excuse.

As these thoughts flash through my mind, I blurt out, “I’m wondering if I should match it with some snacks!”

As I speak, I take out the snack that was given to me by CEO Huang’s non-blood-related granddaughter, Cattie Huang.

That small bag of dried mushrooms.

Chapter 1425: In Modern Day (23)

“These dried mushrooms don’t look... very delicious.” Rozanne looks at the bag of dried mushrooms in my hand seriously for a few seconds before replying hesitantly.

It’s obvious that she’s a little embarrassed to say that the mushroom looks dry and black—it causes alarms to go off, and it can hardly whet up an appetite. After all, I’d offered it out of kind intentions.

Hehe... I take this opportunity to change the topic.

“What’s your drink called?”

Rozanne immediately turns around and picks up the beverage bottle on the table. She says with a smile, “This is it! The design looks cool, right?”

The beverage bottle has a streamlined design with a footprint theme. The name is:

“Reporter.”

That’s different from mine... I politely compliment, “Looks good.”

Rozanne twists the cap that has been opened a long time ago as if she’s preparing to take a sip.

I instinctively want to stop her, but after opening my mouth, I realize that I don't have a reason.

Furthermore, a third of the Reporter beverage is gone. This means that Rozanne has already drank it. There's no point in stopping her now.

Gulp… Rozanne lowers the bottle and twists the cap back on.

"It doesn't taste bad. Try it."

"Okay, okay," I say perfunctorily.

Rozanne doesn't urge me any further. Instead, she points at the remaining beverage bottles in the plastic bag.

"You can also switch bottles."

"No need, there's no need," I reply without hesitation.

Either way, I don't intend to drink it. It doesn't matter if I switch it or not.

After two seconds of deliberation, I look at Rozanne and probe, "How do you feel after drinking it? Any special sensations?"

"Special sensations? Do you think this is a drug? Erm, it's moderately sweet and refreshing. The fragrance will definitely be better after chilling it." Rozanne says, a little pissed.

She doesn't look like she's lying... This means that she probably didn't obtain superpowers from the Reporter beverage... I subconsciously survey my surroundings and realize that my fellow colleagues have more or less drunk some of Rozanne's beverages, but none of them show any signs of abnormality.

They don't even appear dazed or confused.

Could it be that only the Assassin beverage I picked last time has a special effect? I wonder if that's considered being lucky or not... I quickly control my doubts and wave the Instigator beverage in my hand.

"I'll need to get down to work."

"Go ahead. Don't let me stop you." Rozanne waves her hand casually.

Returning to my seat, I sit down. I look at the Instigator beverage in front of me and fall into deep thought.

After about twenty seconds, I use my large mug meant for drinking water. This is something I prepare for taking pleasant gulps of water. I open the cap of the Instigator beverage and pour the liquid inside.

Although I don't plan on drinking this beverage, I'm curious about what the liquid inside looks like, and whether it contains some special powers.

Splash. I pour all of the Instigator beverage into my mug.

That’s too little, isn’t it? That definitely isn’t 500 milliliters! I can’t help but look down on this beverage’s manufacturer.

My mug isn’t small, but it usually can’t hold the entirety of a 550-ml bottle of mineral water.

In other words, while there appeared to be quite a bit of “Instigator” in it, the manufacturer had actually cut corners!

Hmm, it’s dark blue. It’s clear, and it’s quite enticing… I carefully observe the liquid in the mug and gather some preliminary information.

Other than that, the drink is no different from anything else, at least not on the surface.

After some thought, I decide to throw something into the mug to see if there will be any changes.

What do I throw? I look around when I suddenly get a bout of inspiration.

Those dried mushrooms!

Anyway, this isn’t something I plan on eating, so I can use it for experiments.

I really am a genius!

Without any hesitation, I tear open the packaging and throw the black dried mushrooms into the dark blue liquid, watching them stretch out and expand slightly.

There aren't any changes. I'm starting to think that I'm overthinking matters.

Suddenly, messages come from my work's chat group. I start to get busy.

About fifteen minutes later, I finish my work and raise my head, preparing to stretch my neck.

Suddenly, I see a mushroom!

A white and tender mushroom with red star dots all over it!

…*Where did this mushroom come from?* I glance over and discover that it's growing in my mug.

It's about the size of a palm. Its skin, no—its surface is so tender and supple. On the cap, there are mushrooms of the same breed, just like its hands and feet.

What the hell is this? I'm confused.

At that moment, the mushroom sways and the cap moves upwards as though it has lifted its head.

The two slightly larger red stars that look like eyes meet my gaze.

Just like that, I look at it, and it seems to be looking at me.

A few seconds later, the mushroom reaches out its many "hands," and using the edge of the mug as leverage, it jumps out.

In the next second, it jumps to the floor and wildly runs towards the office door.

*F*ck*… I'm still confused.

At the same time, I discover a problem: All of the Instigator beverage in the mug is gone.

Almost subconsciously, I stand up and chase after the mushroom.

I suspect that it's a product from the fusion of the Instigator beverage and the dried mushrooms!

I have to resolve this accident I caused, as soon as possible!

The mushroom is "short" and extremely fast. It passes through the office without being obstructed, and wasn't even discovered. On the other hand, I'm stopped by my colleagues several times and have no choice but to slow down.

So, although the mushroom's footsteps are obviously smaller than mine, it still escapes from the company.

I-it charged into the company next door!

I subconsciously follow.

At this moment, the security guard next door stops me.

“What are you here for?” the tall and strong security guard asks.

My mind races as I come up with an excuse:

“I’m here for Vice President Wu.”

“Vice President Wu?” The security officer doesn’t believe me. “I’ll ask the front desk.”

While he’s walking to the front desk, I approach the door and gaze inside.

I’m shocked by what I’m seeing.

The employees of the company next door are either wearing black hooded robes or wearing strange costumes. They’re dancing with something similar to an “Employees’ Dance for Business.”

A cosplay convention? A masquerade ball? It’s only nine in the morning… I’m confused again, forgetting to sneak inside.

“What’s your boss doing?” I ask when the security guard returns.

It’s so strange!

The security officer shakes his head.

“I don’t know either.

“I’m just a worker.”

Tsk, the moment I hear that, it’s obvious that he’s trying to draw a clear line between him and them… I press, “Is your boss inside too?”

“Yes, that one over there who isn’t wearing anything,” the security guard replies nonchalantly.

I focus my gaze, and the corner of my mouth twitches involuntarily.

Pervert!

Chapter 1426: In Modern Day (24)

Even though I'm separated from them at a distance, with all the weirdly dressed people in the way, I still see the naked man bound in dark red ropes.

As for whether he's wearing something over the lower half of his body, or what he's wearing, I can't see it because of the table, chairs, and other things that are in the way.

In short, the impression that guy gives me is:

A pervert!

And he might even be into S&M.

Of course, it's unclear whether he's a real pervert or just cosplaying.

"Alright, you can go in now," the security guard says casually.

"Huh?" I doubt my ears.

I had lied about being here for Vice President Wu in my rush to give an excuse. I didn't expect to get permission at all. My original plan was to sneak in while the security guard went to inquire at the front desk, and catch that "mushroom man." However, the large-scale cosplay scene inside gave me a shock, causing me to temporarily fall into a dazed state of questioning myself: "Who am I," "Where am I from," and "What am I doing?" I didn't have the chance to take advantage of this opening.

“Vice President Wu has given you permission to enter. Why? Do you not understand what I’m saying?” The security guard senses my confusion.

I’m even more surprised.

“V-Vice President Wu personally said to allow me entry?”

This…

Is he trying to pull me into his marketing team?

The security officer glances at me.

“You aren’t very familiar with Vice President Wu?”

“I’ve only met him a few times,” I quickly emphasize.

The security guard turns to look at the company’s interior. Seeing that Vice President Wu wasn’t nearby, he says, “Vice President Wu doesn’t like to talk. He doesn’t answer questions or give instructions.

“Later, we figured out the rules. Whatever he doesn’t object to on the spot is him giving tacit approval for.”

Is that so… But it could also be because of other reasons. I once knew a friend who wasn’t smart and had a slow reaction. He only understood the first joke when someone was beginning the second joke. Perhaps Vice President Wu is such a person. He doesn’t answer the question because he’s still digesting the information.

He needs more than ten minutes to think about the answer… I don't argue with the security guard and just mutter inwardly.

Since I have an opportunity like this, I obviously wouldn't care if Vice President Wu really acquiesced or if the Creator had given him looks but forgot to give him intelligence. I immediately walk past the security guard and enter the neighboring company.

I carefully circle the edge of the room which is in a noisy din with all kinds of crazy dancing happening, searching for the mushroom man I created by mistake.

Skull decorations… Blood-colored juice… painting made of leather… This… Not only is the perverted boss next door a multi-level marketing person, but he also believes in some strange cult? As I scan my surroundings, my heart beats faster as my urge to escape increases.

If I wasn't already an Assassin and was able to do a Leap of Faith and be in possession of extraordinary powers, I definitely wouldn't have dared to stay any longer.

As I walk, I see a long table filled with breakfast.

At this moment, a man in a long black robe with a hood suddenly turns his head and looks at me.

"Who are you?" he asks hesitantly.

I reply without any scruples, "I'm cosplaying an employee!"

Just because all of you are cosplaying cultists or all kinds of strange figures, does that forbid me from doing a serious role?

“Employee…” The man repeats my words in confusion.

He doesn’t seem to have a high IQ… That’s true. If I’m doing a MLM business, I’ll definitely like this kind of member more. They’re easy to deceive! I take this opportunity to walk past the black-robed man and to the long table.

As I sweep my gaze, joy suddenly surges in my heart.

I see that “mushroom man”!

It’s lying in a pile of roasted mushrooms, wrapping itself with a layer of sauce, pretending to be ordinary, normal food.

However, its seductive aura betrays it.

Even though there’s a lot of food on the long table, it still stands out.

It doesn’t seem to have a high IQ as well… I pretend not to notice as I slowly approach.

Then, I extend my hand toward the mushroom man.

At this moment, a fork stabs the “mushroom man” and lifts it up before I can get to it.

The “mushroom man” attempts to struggle, but to no avail. It’s stuffed into the mouth of a “beautiful-looking” man with a fork and is chewed.

Poor thing. As it had no mouth, it was eaten by the other party before it could even scream.

Me: “…”

“What? What’s wrong?” the man with the androgynous looks asks in a muffled voice while eating the mushroom.

“Are you alright?” I ask hesitantly.

Gulp… The beautiful man swallows the last mouthful of mushroom.

“I’m good.”

“Really? You’re fine?” I ask subconsciously.

I have a nagging feeling that a strange creature like the “mushroom man” wouldn’t die so easily.

“I’m fine.” The beautiful man shakes his head. “You are?”

“I’m with Vice President Wu. How may I address you?” I carefully observe the other party’s condition.

The beautiful man's expression sinks.

"I'm Mr. A."

I stare at him for a few seconds before smiling.

"I'm heading to Vice President Wu's side."

Without any hesitation, I maintain my smile and quickly leave the long table and walk out the door.

After leaving the neighboring company, I turn to the stairwell and hold in my expressions. I take out my phone.

"Hello, is this the police? I found the site of a large-scale pyramid scheme!"

Chapter 1427: In Modern Day (25)

I honestly inform Mr. Policeman about my suspicions of the company next door. After all, this company has existed since before I was employed at my present company. To be able to remain hidden for so many years meant that they knew how to hide the evidence and cover up their tracks.

Also, I actually can't prove that the company next door is involved in a pyramid scheme.

Strange costumes and eccentric behavior are never valid charges.

The reason I called the police was because I was worried about Mr. A's safety. He had eaten that mutated mushroom man. Who knew what would happen if he waited a little while. It wasn't as though I could monitor him and resolve the problem in time.

As for whether the police could solve anything that involved supernatural events, I'm quite confident.

This is a result of simple deduction through logic.

The medium who's good at exorcism, Madam Dai, is Officer Deng's fiancée;

The police department collaborator, Old Neil, is also sensitive to ghosts and obviously has a solution for dealing with them;

The mysterious cult that Officer Deng reminded me to watch out for can create extraordinary beings.

Based on these points, it's easy to conclude that the police have a deeper understanding of supernatural powers.

Since they have a deeper understanding, they definitely wouldn't lack the strength and solutions to deal with it.

Putting away my phone, I glance sideways at the company next door that's still "normal." Suppressing my concern, I return to my desk and start working.

I'm plagued by all kinds of trivial matters for my last project the entire morning. I was so busy that I didn't even have time to poop on company time.

As noon approaches, my phone suddenly buzzes.

I pick it up and see an unfamiliar number.

Who is it? A scammer? Some advertising agent? It's not listed... I mutter as I pick up.

"Hello, were you the one who called the police. You said that Aurora Company at 10-188 at Fengfei Road is suspected to be involved in a pyramid scheme?" A slightly tired voice comes from the other end of the phone.

The police are already here? Have they done the investigation? At that moment, questions flashed through my mind before a scene surfaces:

The cosplayer cultist, Mr. A who looks like a beautiful man, is covered in mushrooms with golden spots. He wobbles as he walks towards the police.

How terrifying… I can't help but shiver and hurriedly reply, "Yes, I called the police.

"I think their behavior is very suspicious. Did… did you find anything?"

"They're a legit company." The policeman on the other end of the line sighs and says, "You can't think that they're involved in a pyramid scheme just because they hold parties early in the morning. There are countless companies that shout slogans and even dance every morning."

"But, one look at their gathering and you can tell it's not normal," I subconsciously retort.

The policeman on the other end of the line says helplessly, "Can't they cosplay in the morning? Can't they have a masquerade party in the morning?

"You can complain about them disturbing the peace, but you can't say that they're running a pyramid scheme.

"They already explained that this is the company's corporate culture."

Can we define a company with such corporate culture as a cult? I originally want to say that, but when I think about the news of punishing employees to crawl like dogs, I feel that the company next door hasn't gone too far.

“Yes, I’m sorry. I was too sensitive,” I apologize hastily.

The policeman on the other end of the line heaves a sigh of relief.

“Don’t do this again in the future...”

Without waiting for him to finish, I forcefully interrupt, “Did you discover anything?”

Was there anyone who got food poisoning because of mushrooms?

“What can we discover? They’re all working hard,” the policeman on the other end of the line says impatiently.

He emphasizes that I shouldn’t be too sensitive and hangs up.

It seems Mr. A is fine... I’m relieved. I stand up and look around.

At this moment, there are only two or three people left in the office waiting for their food to be delivered. The other colleagues have already gone to the office canteen on the second floor.

CEO Huang has always been very generous to his employees. He gives plenty of meal allowance, but all of it is transferred to our employee card. It can only be used at the canteen.

Of course, the company canteen’s standard is quite good. Regardless of the ingredients, quantity, or culinary skills, they’re all satisfactory.

The only problem is that there isn't much variety in staples—only rice, noodles, and wontons. Some of the employees can only rely on delivery food when they want to eat rice noodles or pancakes.

To me, this doesn't pose a problem. As long as the dishes have variety, it doesn't matter what the staple is.

It would be a waste not to use my meal allowance. It's not like it can be used outside!

Rubbing my stomach, I open my drawer, take out my employee card, and run towards the elevator.

After entering the canteen, I look for a window seat first.

Just then, through the window, I see a row of people standing downstairs.

The leader is CEO Huang.

CEO Huang quickly gets into a Rolls-Royce, and it drives off behind another car.

I know that leading car. I just sat in it yesterday—it belongs to our partner company's Rosago.

Thinking of this racer, I suddenly feel a little nauseous. I feel like I'm suffering from motion sickness.

This… Mr. Zaratulstra has arrived via high-speed rail? CEO Huang *is going to personally fetch him… He places great importance on this.* I rein in my thoughts and cast my gaze back at the food selection window.

Besides, this job has already been handed over. What happens next has nothing to do with me!

After having a perfect lunch, I saunter back into the office and lean my neck against a neck pillow.

I have a habit to sleep for a while at noon, or else I'll be groggy in the afternoon.

And I need to listen to music during my afternoon nap to avoid being disturbed by the random noises in the office.

I quickly put on my inner ear headphones, open on a music player, and start searching for today's lullaby.

Eh? There's a new song. It's from overseas, and it's doing pretty well. I glance at it, my interest piqued.

During my afternoon nap, my music of choice has always been more inclined towards songs in foreign languages, because if I don't focus on listening, it won't be easy to understand, and I wouldn't care too much about the lyrics. I won't let my imagination run wild.

The reviews are okay… I quickly decide to buy the song.

When translated, the song's title is "Advance! Advance!"

Its singer is Alger Wilson.

I check the information on this singer and find that he is rather inspirational. He was originally just a crew member who drifted out at sea, but after much hardship, he became a singer.

Chapter 1428: In Modern Day (26)

In a daze, I open my eyes.

*Holy sh*t, when did I fall asleep? I have no recollection at all!*

I glance around blankly and find my colleagues working in their respective cubicles.

I only remember that I was getting ready to listen to a song, and here I am? Did I black out? I didn't drink... Ouch, my head hurts, I'm so dizzy, I want to vomit... At this moment, I feel like I've just woken up from a hangover.

Of course, this is just a feeling, as I've never been drunk.

Raising my hands to rub my temples, I glance at the music player and find that it has stopped playing.

Advance! Advance! ...Yes, I was listening to this song! I can't remember its melody at all... Puzzled, I click on the song's reviews again.

"Nice!"

"An unprecedented experience."

"Excellent pleasure."

…

Because I've read the reviews on the first few pages, I only take a few casual glances and scroll to the end:

"Thank you so much for this song! It cured my chronic insomnia."

"The purest and most punk death rock!"

"This song made me faint. This isn't a description, but literally what happened!"

"I can't imagine how humans can make such sounds…"

"If you're a man, try lasting 30 seconds!"

…

This… This song is a little problematic… I won't listen to this so-called "death rock" again… I grit my teeth for a few seconds before deciding to add another review:

"An unprecedented form of music! It transcends human understanding!"

I have to let others experience it too. I can't be selfish!

After getting a preliminary explanation for the mysterious blackout, I take off my headphones and prepare for work.

However, my head is dizzy and my forehead is throbbing in pain. From time to time, I feel disgusted.

This is a lot worse than the heatstroke I previously suffered from. Even the office's powerful air-conditioning is unable to ease my discomfort.

No, I have to go to the hospital for a checkup. I feel like I'm going to crash… I try to calm myself down, but I still can't hold on.

Luckily, CEO Huang has always been generous. Every employee has two days of paid medical leave without a doctor's note.

I quickly write a request for time off and head to Director Ai's office to ask for his signature.

Perhaps it's because my complexion is really bad, Director Ai doesn't make things difficult for me. Out of concern, he even asks me if I need someone to send me to the hospital.

"There's no need. It's not that serious." I still care about my face. I would never ask for help if I can solve it myself.

"Okay, go back and have a good rest. If there's anything urgent in the afternoon, I will arrange someone else to do it." Director Ai doesn't insist.

Out of the building, I get a rideshare without hesitation. I don't put on a strong front by taking the bus.

I’ve always been willing to spend money when the time calls for it.

“Mushu Hospital.” Very soon, the car arrives. I board it and first verify my destination.

Mushu Hospital is one of the better public hospitals in the surrounding areas, but it’s not one of the best. Hence, there are fewer patients and there wouldn’t be a long line for the Emergency Department.

The hospital that Bai Ailin went to last night is at the district level. Although I haven’t been there before, I have a nagging feeling that it’s very reliable.

“Okay,” the driver answers simply and starts the car.

Time ticks by as I gradually feel alive. My head isn’t that dizzy anymore, and I no longer have cold sweat. The throbbing pain completely disappears.

*Holy f*ck… Did I choose a hospital that’s too far away? I’m scared that I’ll be alright by the time I make it to the hospital…* I can’t help but have a strange thought.

As it turns out, this isn’t wishful thinking. When the driver arrives at my destination, I’m completely awake and alive. I even feel a little hungry.

There’s no need to go to the Emergency Department… After a round of inspection, I’m certain I’m in a good condition.

Thus, my only option is to enjoy this spare time for myself. After all, I've already taken time off, and there's no way to cancel it.

Return home to play games? Find a movie to watch? Ah, right. I still have to register at the Dream Tutoring Classes. I can't not do anything after being paid. I happen to be free right now anyway. I pick up my phone, look for the picture of the address of the tutoring center that I took, call another rideshare, and head there.

"Hello, I'd like to know more about your tutoring class." I don't directly say that I'm going to sign up while facing the male receptionist.

To be honest, I think this tutoring center is a little strange. It actually uses men as receptionists instead of women.

I'm not discriminating against men, but I feel that women are more patient and gentle.

The receptionist briefly introduces the courses they have before asking, "What would you like?"

This fellow is so silly that he's comparable to that Dani... Is this the theme of this tutoring center? I cough lightly and say, "Weekend, business English."

"This is the best course out of our Dream Tutoring Classes. Our principal is in charge of it, and she has even invited a few foreign teachers—real foreign teachers," the receptionist says without end. "We can still get you a discount if you sign up now. The original price is 8,888 yuan, but it's only 6,666 now!"

“Is your principal very capable?” I take the opportunity to ask.

The receptionist points to the corridor.

“She’s been studying abroad for many years and has mastered a lot of languages. She even has a PhD in education.”

I trace the receptionist’s finger and gaze at the ajar classroom door in the corridor.

The one holding the class is a woman. Her side is facing the outside, and she’s wearing a pair of loose jeans. Her upper body is wearing a white slim fit shirt with flowers. Her hair is dyed brown, and she has tied her hair up in a bun.

In addition, based on my Assassin vision, I can clearly see the principal’s side profile. She’s not too old—only in her twenties. She has some baby fat on her face, and the contours of her face are very exquisite. She’s probably pretty good-looking.

“Our principal is very knowledgeable. Other than being a polyglot, she knows how to draw, do oil paintings, sketches, watercolor paintings, and all kinds of paintings. She also knows how to appraise antique, and different musical instruments. She’s practically an all-rounder!” The receptionist’s tone is filled with admiration.

Just as I’m about to respond, a man walks into the tutoring center.

“Look, this is our foreign teacher, Mr. Anderson Hood.” The receptionist immediately introduces him, “He’s proficient in at least ten languages. He can communicate with you alone and train your accent.”

From the corner of my eye, I see a foreign young man with blond hair and blue eyes. He’s wearing a white shirt and black vest. With the intention of testing him, I switch to English.

“Hello, what languages do you know? How long have you been teaching at this tutoring center?”

The tutor named Anderson Hood has his hands in his pockets as he smiles and says, “#@%%#*()()——”

Me: “...”

What is he saying...

Also, *why does this guy look so familiar with the way he has his hands in his pockets?*

Anderson glances at me and chuckles.

“How is it? My Mauritian Creole isn’t bad, right?”

This time, he uses English.

He then translates it into Chinese.

“I don’t understand...” I answer honestly.

I can’t be sure what language he said the first time.

Anderson tsks and says, “It looks like you don’t have any talent in languages.

“Why don’t you learn how to paint from me?”

Chapter 1429: In Modern Day (27)

"..." For a moment, I'm at a loss on how to respond to Anderson Hood. I'm afraid that I would end up quarreling with him the moment I open my mouth.

After a few seconds, I finally find a relatively euphemistic solution.

"Oh, you're even able to paint?"

The receptionist eagerly says, "Heh, he knows a lot of things. He originally came to our country to learn banter, claiming that he's proficient in all kinds of things."

That sounds like sarcasm... The receptionist and this foreign teacher don't seem to be on good terms... I wonder if he's speaking the truth or just joking... Although I'm not particularly good at observing people, his behavior is a little obvious.

"Haha, if you wish to learn banter, I can teach you as well," Anderson Hood says with a well-enunciated Chinese accent.

"We'll see?" I'm a little confused about the current situation, and I have no choice but to say something perfunctory like "I'll check my schedule."

After watching Anderson walk into the office, I turn my head and ask the male receptionist, "Can I not sign up for his class?"

"That's one of your rights." The male receptionist looks excited.

“A wise choice!”

He then gives me a thumbs up.

“T-this… foreign teacher—Anderson… Is he that bad?” I glance in the direction of the office.

The male receptionist chuckles.

“To be honest, he’s very capable. His only flaw is…”

He pauses.

“What is it?” I can’t help but ask in response.

The male receptionist turns solemn.

“That he’s not a mute!”

“Hahaha.” I laugh, half-sincere and half-polite.

Then, I ask curiously, “Do people sign up for his classes?”

“Yes, quite a lot.” The male receptionist curls his lips.

“Aren’t they aware that you can’t withdraw from classes and switch teachers after signing up?” I take the opportunity to gather more details.

“No.” The male receptionist quickly corrects me. “We have one trial lesson. If you’re not satisfied, you can switch to another teacher.”

He pauses and laughs.

“Well, you know, some people just like to get mocked and trampled on.”

It sounds like they have a special fetish… I stop asking further.

“Then I’ll sign up for your principal’s class. Are there weekend classes?”

“Yes.” The male receptionist quickly does the introductions.

I don’t waste any time. After paying 6,666 yuan, I sign up for the Dream Tutoring Classes’ weekend business English class.

After leaving the Dream Tutoring Classes, I don’t leave the building. Instead, I find a quiet corner and take in the feel of the air conditioner. I then make a record of today’s events.

To be a commercial spy, one has to act like a commercial spy. I have to live up to Miss Huang’s payment!

Done! I casually tap my phone and look at the department chat to prevent myself from missing any important notices.

Rozanne: “Take note, take note: CEO Huang is bringing a VIP over to visit. Everyone, please be more professional.”

VIP... Oh, that client named Zaratulstra. Heh heh, I actually missed him again. Looks like we aren't fated to meet... I hold my phone and consider what to do next.

It's rare for me to have free time in the afternoon on a non-weekend day. I can't waste it.

Hmm, I'll go catch a movie. There shouldn't be a lot of people at this time. With that thought in mind, I immediately head to the larger mall next door. Then, I take the elevator to the fourth floor and start searching for the cinema.

Eh, there's a signing event... Looking around, I see many people lining up at the entrance of a large bookstore.

It's obvious that a famous author is here to do a fansigning event.

With some level of curiosity, I deliberately pass by and see a few poster stands.

Romance Queen... Slacker Without a Dream... This pen name, heh, the authors nowadays really have weird pen names... I don't know the author of the fansign event, nor do I have any intention of joining in the fun.

Of course, I'm still a little curious as to what the author looks like. After all, the few poster stands that aren't blocked mainly introduced the Romance Queen's new book without any pictures.

I'll come take a look after the movie... I mutter to myself and follow the road signs to the other side of the mall. At the end of the road, I find the cinema.

Because I haven't thought of what to watch, I stay in the lobby and look for something that piques my interest from the promotional pictures.

Suddenly, I feel the light in front of me dim.

A tall man appears beside me!

He's so tall. He's almost two meters… I look at him from the corner of my eye and realize that he looks like a basketball player.

Wait, he seems to be wearing the junior high school uniform near my neighborhood!

*Holy sh*t, he's only in middle school and he's already two meters tall?*

What do children nowadays eat?

A-and he dyed his hair brownish-yellow…

Does he need to attend classes? Well, it's summer vacation now.

But why are you wearing your school uniform during the summer vacation?

As I lampoon, I take a stealthy step in the opposite direction, in case the child makes me look like a dwarf.

Meanwhile, I find the movie that I’ll be watching. I don’t have to wait too long.

“The Pirate 3: Crazy Adventurer”

In the corresponding promotional pictures, a man in a top hat and trench coat is standing between lightning, waves, and storms with three retro pirate ships surrounding him. And at the bow of each ship stands a beautiful female pirate.

Chapter 1430: In Modern Day (28)

"The Pirate 3: Crazy Adventurer"...

It looks okay, it should be the kind of popcorn flick that I enjoy...

I look around and make a preliminary decision. I quickly take out my phone and log in to the film review website to check out its score and reviews.

"The aesthetics are shallow..."

"The plot is simple and crude..."

"Other than the special effects and the few actresses, there's nothing else..."

"The protagonist only knows how to act cool and has zero acting skills..."

"Nothing deep at all."

"It's a passable commercial film, but it's only passable."

*F*ck, reviews like these... I like movies like this. I'm just watching it to kill time and don't need deep, thought-provoking shows...* I read the reviews and find that it isn't that bad. I have a rough idea.

The giant middle-school student standing beside me in front of the poster has already left to buy the tickets.

“One ticket for The Pirate 3, the earliest time slot.” I go over only after the middle-school student heads elsewhere in the mall, I don’t want the contrast to be that apparent. It makes me feel inferior.

“There’s still 15 minutes to the next time slot,” the ticket sales staff informs me.

“That’s fine.” I don’t plan on shopping, so I decide to find a place to sit and wait. After all, they’ll allow entry inside very soon.

Of course, before that, I buy a medium-sized iced Coke and a serving of butter popcorn.

I obviously have to match a popcorn flick with popcorn!!

Otherwise, how can it be called enjoyment?

In the past, I rarely watched movies, just to stop myself from overeating!

And now, my weight has returned to my university days, and it’s very muscular.

This is the beauty of life!

Not long after, I enter the venue according to the signs and find my seat.

Even though it's office hours, there are quite a lot of people in the audience. A large portion of them are clearly students.

Summer vacation. I also want a summer vacation... I take a sip of iced Coke and put on my 3D glasses.

At this moment, the two-meter tall middle-school student walks along the aisle towards me.

Under normal circumstances, the gap between me and the row in front is sufficient for a person to pass through. However, the figure before me is simply too huge, and it isn't possible for me to grant him passage by just pulling in my legs.

I have no choice but to stand up and lean back.

The middle-school student successfully passes through. He turns his head and smiles sincerely.

"Thank you, Uncle."

"...No problem." I still think I'm young.

This interlude doesn't hinder me from eating popcorn, drinking iced Coke, and watching the various trailers on the big screen.

Very quickly, The Pirate 3 officially begins. My smile only lasts for five minutes before it stiffens.

It's not that the movie is worse than I expected, but that the male lead's fortuitous encounter is from drinking a potion.

The potion gives me the feeling that it's the Assassin beverage I drank before!

Man… The Assassin beverage is actually a potion? Who produced this movie? Hmm, I remember seeing the dragon logo just now… Hall Film Company? This can't be a reflection of reality, can it? I instantly immerse myself in the plot, but there aren't any other potions later in the film. Instead, it shows the serious side-effects of the potion.

My heart grows heavier as I watch it. I even feel like I'm the male lead.

After the movie, I can't help but curse inwardly.

Is this guy that clueless?

Three beautiful female pirates are surrounding him, but in the end, he only took a silly boatswain with him!

Seriously! Where's the treasure they promised, and them heading off into the sunset while accompanied by beauties? Yes, it's all disappeared off into the sunset…

After watching the easter egg, I pick up my empty Coke and popcorn bucket and walk towards the aisle.

At this moment, a short girl who's clearly less than 1.6 meters tall suddenly comes over and suppresses her voice.

"Someone is monitoring you."

Monitoring me… Who? I subconsciously look around, but I can't find the suspect.

And the woman who warned me has already followed the crowd and walked to the exit.

For real? I think for a moment and decide to leave the cinema first before confirming the situation.

There are too many people here, and it's too noisy. Calling the police wouldn't work!

…

At the same time, a train stops at a high-speed rail station in the city.

One of the carriages slowly opens, but there are only four to five people inside. They form a stark contrast with the crowd in the other carriages.

Those few people are dressed as if they're going to a comic convention. After exchanging a glance, they stand up and walk out with heavy footsteps.

What they see is an extremely modern platform and crowds of people.

—End of the first Installment of the Lord of Mysteries Trilogy—

TL Note:

This chapter is in a way the prologue to the second installment of the LoM trilogy which will happen about 2 years from now when Cuttlefish's new book—Embers Ad Infinitum—ends!

Advertising his book! Be prepared for a well-thought out and detailed apocalyptic, cyberpunk world with a setting superseding *Lord of Mysteries*!

Take note that the beginning of the story is slow (maybe even slower) like LoM, but make sure to unlock all available chapters with COINS so that the book is continued! Otherwise, it will be dropped in Trial Reads! Have faith in Cuttlefish! Also, please continue supporting Cuttlefish by unlocking chapters in Coins even if it's continued!

Synopsis below:

Our protagonist, Shang Jianyao, is crazy—literally crazy, at least that's what the doctors said. Living in a huge, underground building of Pangu Biology, one of the few remaining factions in this apocalyptic wasteland known as the Ashlands, he acts in unfathomable ways that's head-scratching, comical, and shrewd. So is he really crazy? Probably.

He has a grand dream: to save all of humanity. Intricately tied to this dream is something everyone in the Ashlands believes in: Deep in a particular ruin buried away by danger and famine, a path leading to a new world awaits. To step into the new world, one only needs to find a special key and open that certain door. There, the land is bountiful, as if milk and honey flows freely. The sunlight is dazzling, as if all coldness and darkness are washed away. The people will no longer have to face desolation, monsters, infections, mutations, and all kinds of dangers. There, children are joyous, adults are happy, everything is fine as they are supposed to be.

Every Antiquarian, Ruin Hunter, and Historian roaming the Ashlands knows: That’s the New World.

Side Story: A Day in The Year 1346

Note: It was published as an exclusive side story of *Lord of Mysteries* in the "Chinese Physical Book Volume 3." It corresponds to Web Novel *Chapter 139: Studying 3-0782* to *Chapter 213: Another Look aka.* End of Volume 1.

This is a **Bullet Point Paraphrasing Summary** by Windvally, not the complete translation of the story.

- In the Year 1346, Leonard Mitchell was testing his Sleepless abilities and ended up rolling down the staircase of Blackthorn Security Company like a meatball.

- Dunn Smith was a Sequence 9 Sleepless for 3 years, a Sequence 8 Midnight Poet for 9 years. He used over 2 weeks to adapt and control his Sequence 7 Nightmare powers.

- Dunn is bringing Leonard to answer a request for help from Tingen University Department of History. An associate professor Mrs. Sinel is experiencing auditory hallucinations and having the same nightmare every night. This will be Leonard's debut, officially getting in touch with supernatural cases. Mrs. Sinel is a believer of the Evernight Goddess, thus Blackthorn took the case even though Tingen's University District is under the jurisdiction of Machinery Hivemind.

- Rule of Jurisdiction: When a case does not involve believers of multiple Gods (meaning all involved individuals believe in only one of the Orthodox Gods), Supernatural Cases' management rights are delegated based on religion and not based on district.

- Nighthawks are responsible for Tingen City's North District, West District, and Golden Maple District.

- Daly Simone (on that day in the year 1346) wore a black color schemed shirt, trousers, and jacket. Looks smooth and clean but not overly masculine. She wore a Smokey Eyeshadow makeup, a style that was invented by Emperor Roselle and spread from Intis to the Loen Kingdom. Her clothing in addition to her unique aura, making her appear overall gloomy and cold as if a female ghost walking out of a folktale.

- Cuttlefish knifing us with Daly teasing Leonard, Dunn said don't tease the young ones, Daly rebuked with "not the young ones, that means you would be okay?" Dunn changing subjects.

- Daly insisted on going with Dunn and Leonard, commenting on how her abilities complement Dunn's, while Leonard is the extra one that's useless as he's just a "lower sequence Dunn".

- Leonard is surprised why Daly is a lot quieter on their way to the University, only occasionally making fun of Dunn. Leonard inferred that Daly has some things on her mind.

- The University District is divided into two parts by Khoy River, one side is Tingen University, the other side is Khoy University.

- Mrs. Sinel is a middle-aged female who wears a pair of gold-rimmed glasses with small chains attached. She has heavy bags under her eyes, her skin appears rather pale and gloomy, her whole condition doesn't seem too good.

- Mrs. Sinel has been having very similar nightmares every night since two weeks ago. In this nightmare, she's placed within a battlefield filled with corpses. The smell of blood that permeates the battlefield is extremely real, she could even remember the smell at this moment.

- Dunn: Similar? Not "The Same"? Mrs. Sinel stated the nightmares sometimes are the same battlefield scene, sometimes the nightmare "progresses forward".

- Initially, it was just corpses littered everywhere on the ground, blood-soaked the place full. After that, gradually the sky was painted red as well. And without me noticing, countless wounds and cuts appeared on my body as well, blood pouring out from each and every one of them nonstop. At which point I was scared awake.

- No matter how I sleep, when I sleep, where I sleep, this dream will always appear. Just since a few days ago, I even started hearing shouts and screams of agony under broad daylight. Almost as if two armies that I could not perceive are fighting around me. Since a few days ago, even in my dreams, figures are gradually manifesting in the distance as well, under the blood-red sky.

- Daly walked around Mrs. Sinel's room a bit. her eyes first turned gray-white, then turned again into a colorless state.

- Daly leaned close to Dunn's ears and whispered her results, making Dunn feel uneasy about their body position lol.

- Two weeks ago, Mrs. Sinel bought a batch of artifacts that supposedly originated from The 4th Epoch. Recently she has been constantly studying and researching these artifacts, trying to determine if they are indeed from The 4th Epoch.

- There were many artifacts, but one caught Dunn's eye immediately - A dark golden-colored coin.

- This dark golden-colored coin:

    1. Size approximately the same as a 1£ gold coin

    2. One side is comparatively more simple designed; The protruding patterns constituted a war chariot

    3. The other side is rather complicated; Its pattern is a combination of several different parts

    4. Mrs. Sinel "It's a money coin from The Tudor Empire in The 4th Epoch" (Dunn agrees)

    5. The complicated side: The main component part is a Crown with a Cape that falls down naturally under it, attached to the crown. The lower part of the Crown is surrounded by 5 symbols. Among those 5 symbols, the one on the furthest left, left of the cape, and parallel to the cape, is a "layers of doors" drawn using simple lines. The one on the furthest

right is a disk, its surface is divided into 12 spaces, making it resemble a clock, but there’s only one clock hand in the center. In addition, those 12 spaces aren’t evenly distributed. They are of varying sizes with either dark or bright coloration. Giving viewers a very uneven, unbalanced feeling.

6. Aside from those two symbols that clearly stood higher than the other three, the remaining three symbols are located on the very bottom. They are parallel with each other, in the order of from left to right they are: a vertical eye made from many small and thin patterns, five fingers (normal humanoid length difference) without the hand part - ring finger and little finger are curled up, the other three fingers are naturally spread out as if symbolizing the hour hand, minute hand, and second hand, and lastly a door that’s being split in the middle by a vertical long sword.

- Dunn stated the coin has problems and needs to be purified by holy water and ritual. Mrs. Sinel stated if the purification is unsuccessful she’s donating the coin to the church.

- Dunn wrapped the coin in three layers of white paper, on each paper he drew an Evernight Goddess’s holy emblem.

- After Dunn and Co. left, Mrs. Sinel’s mind manifested Dunn’s face without her realizing it, she focused on his gray pupils, as if gazing onto a clam and deep lake. She fell asleep till noon without a nightmare.

- After the case is solved. When they are chatting and writing the report, Dunn asked Daly why she’s so quiet today, Leonard listened.

- Daly raised up a piece of white paper and block it in front of her and said “I’m pregnant”. Dunn and Leonard simultaneously spit their coffee which gets blocked by the paper.

- Daly stated she was just joking and said it’s just that she’s ready for sequence 7 advancement. By then she would be high enough to be appointed captain at a Different Location.

- Dunn, without any understanding of the situation, supported her decision. Daly only watched quietly as he’s talking.

Side Story: Rebellious Teenager

Note: It was published as an exclusive side story of *Lord of Mysteries* in the "Taiwanese Physical Book, ***Lord of Mysteries 01: Commission of Gold Pound***" that covers from Web Novel *Chapter 213: Another Look* to *Chapter 242: Bakerland*.

This is a **Bullet Point Paraphrasing Summary** by Windvally, not the complete translation of the story.

Intis Southern Region, The Town of Nosil.

[Another beautiful day is about to beginning.]

Danitz said as he smiled at his friends around him. He is currently sitting atop metal fences situated near the edge of the town.

[A beautiful day!]

His friends shouted loudly, appearing very energetic.

For teens like them, their clothing isn't exactly the best in quality, but most definitely trendy, their choices closely resembles the current tending styles of Trier.

Of course, they were only following, but not matching, because there's a very big difficulty that's preventing them from doing so

- No money!

Bullet Point Summary to Skip some segments:

- After goofing with friend for the whole day, Danitz went back to him.

- His father tried to beat him, but he dodges skillfully, never got hit once, and his father is dead tired and angry.

- Parents stated he's 16 now and needs to take up responsibilities. They talked with the servant head working for the owner of a grape farm in the town. Danitz could be an apprentice servant.

- Danitz wants to go to Trier and be rich

- The next day Danitz slipped out of home before his parents could catch him.

- He met up with his friends told him a new group of sailors and a bard arrived at the town's local bar.

- They went to the bar together.

The town's bar almost have no interior decorations, only the wall was painted, and a few pictures cut from old magazines and newspapers were plastered on the wall.

At the bar counter, above the alcohol shelf, hanged the head of a giant snake, already white and cleaned to the bone.

That empty eye socket, is large enough to swallow the mouth of a normal adult, causing every drunkard who visits this bar to lower their head unconsciously when meeting its eyes.

Danitz was no exception.

According to what he knew, this giant snake skull was brought back from the Southern Continent by this bar's owner. It's that man's souvenir for remembering many years of adventure.

That's also why, even though this mister is rather quiet and introverted, no one dares to have greedy thoughts about his bar.

Even if a mafia from the big cities come to this place, when they see that giant snake skull, that owner's ridiculous and exaggeratedly muscular arms, legs, and just muscle in general, most would probably wisely choose to interact peacefully. After all, a small town's bar isn't exactly that profitable, it's not worth the trouble.

Danitz was always a little disappointed by this.

It's not that he wanted a fellow native to be bullied, but rather he desired to witness how strong the bar owner is, as someone who used to work as a mercenary and adventurer on the Southern Continent.

In a way, the owner could be counted as a legendary person of the small town of Nosil. No competition within the past 30 years at the very least.

He left this place at a very young age, headed towards the Southern Continent for adventure. Around his middle age, he returned to his home town, carrying with him a decent fortune, a body of muscle, and a giant snake skull. He opened up a bar, married a widow, and had a kid.

He stayed absolutely silent in regards to his nearly 20+ years of adventurous life on the Southern Continent. No matter who asked, he only responded with unimportant things to change the subject.

Danitz was very disappointed by this.

However, Danitz once heard from a friend who live close to the bar owner, that the man will always do one of two things every single night: He either drink until it's nearly morning before dropping, or fuck his wife until very very late into the night.

He seemed to be afraid of entering sleep.

If I have a beautiful wife, I will also screw her up and down until late into the night....Dantiz mumbled to himself in a low voice, while keeping an eye out for the sailors his friend mentioned.

Bullet Point Summary to Skip some segments:

- They mingled and drank with the sailors, acting like kids pretending to be mafia adults.

- The sailors are friendly, here in town only to stock up on wine and fresh water.

- They told Danitz and his friend about the life of a secret-treasure hunter on the sea.

- They told the story of a ship called [Laurel Flower].

- [About 100 years ago, Leon Kingdom had a ship called Laurel Flower. It was filled with old, jewelry, and valuables they ransacked from the Southern Continent. It strayed off course and sank to the bottom at a location somewhere in the Berserk Sea and Sonia Sea. Finding it means obtaining things that can sell for a couple billion Verl Gold.]

The young adult sailor who's now drunk with a rather red face, looked around at these teenagers listening to his stories and laughed.

[Just that much money was able to surprise all of you? There are many more legends on the seas.]

[At a certain location on the Berserk Sea, the treasure of The God of Death is waiting. It is waiting for a person with a very specific, special key to open it. And that person? He will become the new God of Death....On the seas, every single individual is chasing after the [Fountain of Youth], just one single sip from it, will grant a person eternal youth.Not only will he never growing old ever again, but he will also become extremely powerful...]

At this point, the bard who traveled here along with the sailors started playing his lyre:

[They raised their head and looked at the sky, that fire like cloud looked like a seas of crimson, wide and glittering.]

[They looked down at the ocean, reflections of light scattered forth, a round bright moon is rising from the surface of the sea.]

[They walked across flat yet harden surface of sand]

[They walked into caves corroded by years of rain and wind]

[It’s like a home delicately designed just for them, there are halls, gem filled ceilings, and living rooms...] (Altered from a irl poem)

Bullet Point Summary to Skip some segments:

- Danitz asked the guy if he can be a treasure hunter too. The guys told him to grow more muscle first. And stated pure treasure hunters are a rare sight, as most are also pirates on the side.

- Danitz isn’t giving up and is angry. When these people are done drinking, as soon as they turned around a corner out of Danitz sight, he gave them a middle finger and said Dogshit!

- As Danitz is about to leave the closing bar, he passed by the bar owner who is about to close the front door. The bar owner slowly said in a very deep voice:

[Never go onto the sea.]

- Danitz was stunned for a second, and looked towards the bar owner with unfocused eyes. The bar owner stood still in the dim environment, neither his eyes nor his facial expressions were definable in the darkness. With a bam, the owner closed the door, blocking Danitz's view of him.

- Danitz stayed home the next morning, not wanting to meet his friends, as he's unsure if his friend heard the sailors rejecting his question of becoming a treasure hunter.

- For a teenager, saving face, his self-esteem is perhaps even more important than his life!

- His father was angry, guessing that he probably went to goof at the bar yesterday.

- His father told him that the sailors was only able to carry part of their wine and water cargo with them. The grape farm owner still need to send the rest of the goods to Sali Port for the sailors.

- His parents used their connection and some money to get this job for Danitz. Knowing that he would use this chance to do what he always wanted to do. They love him after all.

- His father told Danitz [Do not die out there.]

- Dantiz was excited. He's going to have leave right now.

[He said he doesn't want to come out and see you, because he will get angry every time he sees you.]

Danitz's mother said while wiping away some tears on the corner of her eyes.

Danitz cursed that stubborn old man with a few sentence inside his heart, he hugged his mother, and turned around to walk towards the waiting caravans.

As the caravans started moving, after traveling about 10-20 meters, Dantiz turned his head around unconsciously, his old man was standing next to his mother, not knowing when he already came out.

A bright smile appeared on Danitz's face, he waved his right hand at them, and shouted silently inside his heart:

[Father, Mother, I will return after becoming rich!]

Multi-Character Audio Drama – Special Episode: Klein’s Niece

Note: This is a non-canon special episode of *Lord of Mysteries* released on May 28th, 2021 on **Himalaya Audio Book APP**. It is translated by Windvally.

Klein’s Niece POV:

Today, I greeted Mr. Fool~

I told Dakye [1] about this, but he didn’t believe me.

I wasn’t lying to him though. ヽ(ಠ_ಠ) ノ

Ah!

That’s right!

At the time, why did I not tell him what Mr. Fool looked like?

He has……*scribbling noise*

He……has…..*scribbling noise*

Eh? The ink ran out? *scribbling noise*

Huh, it's working again~ (^.^)

scribbling noise

Anyways, Dakye is a big dummy!

All he does is reciting weird poem lines.

The book he lent me last time, <The World's World>, was not enjoyable to read in the slightest!

disappointed humpfh

Forget it! I will listen to auntie, from now on I will never bring this up with someone else again, that I've met Mr. Fool.

Today's dinner, we are having Mr. Fool's holy meal [2].

That's what father said: "This is a holy meal."

But aren't these type of food what we normally have in our family anyways?

Ummh......

Lamb boiled with soft tofu.

Beef soup.

Mashed potato.

Fried Tussock fish.

Stewed rhubarb.

giggles There's also sweet ice tea!

Sweet ice tea taste so delicious~ ლ(♡□♡ლ)

Mmh……After we finished the holy meal, my father was once again busy discussing about curly baboons. He won't play with me.

Uhm……That's why, I am not telling him ~

~ that I had ice cream this morning!

Mmh, the little big brother [3] who gifted me ice cream was really nice.

Mmh~~~ *hiccup*

Mmh…I am really full.

Auntie said, if I pray to Mr. Fool before I go to sleep, there will be angels descending into my dream world and giving me good dreams.

Mmh, Mr. Fool is so great! I have decided to give this a try.

scribbling noise

It’s a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Fool.

Have a good night!

closing diary noise

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1. The name sound like “Dakye” [达克耶], no script to see the actual Chinese word used for the name, so I can only guess. Seems like an alias used by Leonard.

2. I know there’s words like Sacrament/Communion/Mass etc., but those are Christian terms. I will just use holy meal for the sake of simplicity.

3. Basically, probably Will. She calls him “little big brother”, a Chinese term used for a boy/male older than you but within the same developmental stage as you. And often not used on people past 40 years old. It’s not used for family members or friends, only for neighbors and strangers that you have good impressions of.

Bonus Chapter: That Corner (1)

“There! It’s right there!” A young man with long brown hair and a pirate-like bandana shouted as he pointed at a nearby island.

He was standing on the starboard of a three-masted sailboat. The rolling waves drowned out most of his voice.

A muscular man with a black eye patch reached out to hold the shipboard. He frowned and muttered to himself in shock and suspicion, “I don’t remember there being such an island on this sea route...”

This was not the first time their ship had plied this sea route.

The young man who had shouted replied excitedly, “This means that it’s usually hidden. It only appears at specific moments.

“There must be treasures on such an island!

“Captain, in the words of that strange monk, a fortuitous opportunity has presented itself!”

He spoke in the Loen language. “Fortuitous opportunity” was a term pieced together by two words.

“That monk spouts words indecipherable to us. Pay no heed to them.” The muscular man wearing an eye patch raised his hand and ruffled his slightly messy short yellow hair. “And I often tell you guys that treasures are often accompanied by danger.”

As he spoke, he pointed at his right eye which was covered by the eye patch.

“That’s the cost.”

The young man with the pirate-like bandana sincerely said, “But, Captain, isn’t this the purpose of our adventure? For treasure!”

They were a group of treasure hunters from different places. Of course, they occasionally worked as pirates and ‘borrowed’ food, drinks, and necessities from passing merchant ships. After all, ideals alone couldn’t feed them.

The captain fell silent for a moment before saying, “Gather four to five people, and we’ll step foot on the island to take a look. The rest of you, prepare to set sail at any time.”

The young man’s eyes lit up.

“You agreed? Captain, you agreed!”

The captain chuckled.

“Weimer, if not for the fact that there’s no other choice, no one at my age would continue to be a treasure hunter.”

He appeared to be in his thirties, but his blue eyes showed signs of age.

“Fine.” Weimer held up his hands. “Whatever you say.”

He immediately became excited.

“I’ll get Ol’ Keaton!”

Ol’ Keaton was the ship’s first mate. He believed in the God of Knowledge and Wisdom and had mastered many languages. If they didn’t bring him along on such an expedition, it was very likely that they would throw away whatever treasures they found as trash.

More importantly, Ol’ Keaton was also very strong.

When the ship docked at the dock that seemed to have long been abandoned, an exploration team of four had already gathered beside the gangway.

They were Captain Gray, First Mate Ol’ Keaton, Boatswain Parvi, and Veteran Seaman Weimer.

“No one…” Parvi looked into the distance and muttered regretfully.

The weather in the Berserk Sea today wasn’t bad. Visibility was extremely high under the blue sky, and the small port hid no secrets from her.

This place was incomparably quiet as if it had been dead for many years.

“It’ll be more terrifying if there were people!” Weimer added.

It implied many things if such a hidden island remained inhabited.

Parvi was wearing a white shirt and brown pantaloons. She had a pair of beautiful light-blue eyes and a slightly androgynous appearance.

She glared at Weimer.

“You want to stay behind and clean the deck?”

Weimer shrugged and shut his mouth.

Having become a boatswain as a woman, she needed to manage many unruly crew members; she would never go easy on her threats.

Captain Gray, who was surveying the area, gave an order.

“Let’s get ashore!”

He then exhorted, “We’ll do it the old way. During the first exploration, don’t touch anything. Just look and listen.”

“No problem!” Weimer was the first to rush out of the ship and run down the gangway to the dock.

He jumped up excitedly mid-run and glided to the ground like a big bird.

The sound caused by his actions spread out in all directions, mixed with some echoes.

Behind him, Gray, Ol' Keaton, and Parvi followed carefully.

"If you continue that recklessness of yours and act on your own like an uncivilized wild dog, I'll tie you up and hang you at the stern to fish for sharks!" Parvi quickly walked to Weimer's side and warned him in a hushed voice.

Weimer nodded solemnly and muttered, "Girlboss, with your personality, you should join the Church of Storms instead of believing in the Evernight Goddess..."

Parvi didn't say anything. She looked around and followed Captain Gray and First Mate Ol' Keaton.

The port was not big. There was only a lighthouse, two simple docks, five warehouses, and a few buildings that served as a hotel, restaurant, bar, and police station. It did not take long for the four of them to circle the area.

Apart from the fact that there was no one around, everything seemed normal.

Weimer looked at the tables in the house facing the street through a relatively clear glass window and did not speak for a long time.

His expression was a little solemn given his personality.

Inside the house, on the dining table, there was a cup with brownish-black liquid and two pieces of moldy toast.

Next to them were several neatly folded newspapers.

It looked like the owner was about to enjoy breakfast when he suddenly encountered an emergency and had to leave in a hurry. He did not even have time to flip open the newspapers.

He never returned.

It would be considered normal if there was only one such example. After all, accidents were unavoidable. However, the entire port was in a similar situation. It was inevitable that it would make one's hair stand on end and imagination run wild.

In that instant, all the local residents, no, all the living creatures, seemed to have evaporated.

"They haven't been gone for long..." Captain Gray's slightly hoarse voice broke the team's silence.

Parvi subconsciously replied, "Indeed, if this port has been abandoned for a long time, the food will not just be moldy."

It seemed like only a few days or weeks had passed since the bizarre incident had happened.

Ol' Keaton retracted his gaze from the street and nodded gently.

"That's what the plants here say."

There were obvious wrinkles at the corners of the First Mate's mouth. His hair was already mottled with natural curls. He was wearing a white robe and brass-framed glasses.

"Ah?" Weimer was momentarily slow to react.

He then looked at the place where Ol' Keaton had sized up and quickly understood why he said that.

There weren't many weeds in the harbor. There were some plain or gorgeous mushrooms growing sporadically on the wooden buildings. They seemed to have existed all along.

The natural world had obviously not had enough time to invade this place.

Ol' Keaton saw Weimer's enlightened expression and didn't explain further. He turned to Captain Gray and solemnly said, "I'm worried that something might happen if we stay here for too long."

"What might happen? Could it be that we will also disappear into thin air…" Before Weimer could finish speaking, a tanned palm appeared over his mouth.

This palm pushed his head and pressed him against the wall.

"There won't be a next time!" Parvi glared at Weimer and warned under her breath.

Weimer nodded with difficulty, indicating that he understood.

When Parvi released him, he muttered softly, “This isn’t like you, Girlboss. You actually didn’t slam the back of my head against the wall…”

Parvi chuckled.

“I’m afraid that the commotion will be too great and awaken up the bizarreness hidden here.”

Captain Gray didn’t care about their little bout. He took out his silver-white pocket watch and opened the lid.

“We’ll return to the ship in another fifteen minutes.

“If everything remains normal, we’ll prepare a second exploration tomorrow.”

“Alright!” Weimer was the first to agree.

The four of them maintained a fine battle formation as they skirted the buildings in front of them and headed for the edge of the port.

There was a slightly stained steam locomotive parked here. The two tracks extended deep into the island.

Parallel to the tracks was a cement road.

This was exactly what Gray and the others had imagined. After all, the port bore the responsibility of loading and unloading goods, traveling passengers, and connecting other towns with convenient road traffic.

However, to their surprise and confusion, the railway was only one to two hundred meters long. At the end of it stood a sizable town.

Even though they were still at the edge of the port, the four of them could see the situation there with their naked eyes.

“Wh—” Weimer could not express his feelings in words. He could only curse under his breath. “If I were the owner of this island, I would definitely tie up the bastard who suggested such repairs at the stern to fish for sharks!”

Based on their experience in many ports, this arrangement was simply abnormal.

The town 100 meters away had to be closer and connected to this side to form a port city, or it should be a few kilometers away and be independent, unlike now!

“There might be a deeper meaning,” Ol’ Keaton said with a frown. “This might have something to do with the bizarre happenings here.”

After he finished speaking, no one responded for a moment.

After a few seconds, Weimer looked at the town not far away and said, “Captain, do we head over to take a look?”

Captain Gray nodded.

“Sure. Twelve minutes left.”

They then walked along the cement road toward the small town.

On both sides of the road, weeds flourished and mushrooms dotted the area. The closer they got to their destination, the more it was like this.

Before long, the four treasure hunters arrived at the edge of the town.

There was a wooden board erected there. On it was a word written in Loen: “Utopia.”

“This place is called Utopia,” Weimer muttered to himself as he cast his gaze at Ol’ Keaton.

Ol’ Keaton shook his head slowly, indicating that he had never heard of it.

It was the same for Parvi and Captain Gray.

They observed the situation inside from the edge of the town and confirmed that the streets were also empty. It was so quiet that even the wind seemingly found it unbearable to pass.

As they walked forward step by step, the four of them saw the Iris Hotel, Utopia’s Telegraph Office, and many buildings. However, without exception, the interior of these buildings revealed that their owners had left in a hurry and never returned.

There were also cups with some water left, dry clothes that were halfway through their washing, cutlery that had been laid out, musical instruments that had not been put away, books that had been flipped through, carriages that had stopped by the roadside without any horses… These things all reconstructed the appearance of the town before the bizarre situation happened.

“I keep feeling that something is missing…” Weimer couldn’t help but whisper when he saw the municipal square in sight.

Bonus Chapter: That Corner (2)

Parvi shot him a glance.

“People are missing!”

“No, no, no, that’s not it. I know that.” Weimer shook his head seriously.

His eyes lit up.

“I know what’s missing!”

“What?” Captain Gray and First Mate Ol’ Keaton asked in unison.

Weimer laughed.

“Money, notes, and gold coins!”

He straightened his back and continued explaining, “Although we haven’t entered the houses to conduct a detailed search, according to my experience, even if we just look from the outside, we should be able to find some. However, there’s nothing at all!”

“Perhaps it’s just that the people here aren’t very rich and don’t have the habit of leaving their money around.” Parvi didn’t agree.

This was not an important problem. The four of them quickly diverted their attention. After entering the municipal square, they looked at the tallest building.

It was a black-spired cathedral.

Mushrooms tenaciously grew out of the cracks in the bricks of the cathedral. They were either simple and plain, or gorgeous and colorful. They strung together, showing a presence that couldn't be ignored in front of the green vines.

"This place feels like it's been abandoned for even longer." Parvi paused before saying, "From the architectural style, this looks like the cathedral of the Goddess. Do the people here also believe in the Goddess?"

She found this rather peculiar.

The residents of such a hidden island and strange town seem to believe in the Evernight Goddess…

Ol' Keaton stared at it for a few seconds before saying, "Seems so."

Then, he immediately added, "It feels like the closer we get to the square and the cathedral, the longer it appears to be abandoned."

Be it the weeds on the road, the green plants on the surface of the buildings, or the mushrooms of all kinds, the closer they got to the center of the town, the more numerous they became. And the cathedral seemed to be covered in a green coat with many speckled holes.

After a moment of silence, Parvi suggested, “Let’s go to the cathedral. As long as the Goddess is still watching this land, there won’t be any particularly serious problems there.”

Captain Gray and Ol’ Keaton didn’t object, but the former reiterated the rules of this exploration.

“After entering the cathedral, you can only use your eyes to see and ears to hear. Don’t do anything else.”

“No problem.” Weimer walked towards the cathedral at the side of the square.

This left Parvi with no choice but to gesture a circle on her chest and simply ask for the Goddess’s protection.

As there wasn’t much time left, the four of them sped up and quickly arrived at the cathedral’s entrance.

They were in no hurry to push the door open and enter. They “sized up” their surroundings individually.

“Very quiet,” Captain Gray concluded.

The other three also expressed that they did not find any problems.

The black cathedral’s door was ajar. After Weimer exerted force with his hands, it slowly opened.

The bottom of Captain Gray’s black eye patch immediately lit up, helping him see the scene inside clearly.

There were no tables or chairs in the hall. There were windows on both sides that shone with light, and it was dark red above.

Drip, drip, drip. Drops of viscous, pale-yellow liquid fell from the sky and hit the ground like rain, giving people the feeling that the dome was severely damaged and was facing a storm.

Before Gray could speak, he saw the viscous, disgusting liquid dissolve into puddles.

The puddles rolled and bubbled endlessly.

The bubbles popped, and deformed babies with moist skin and pale yellow dirt crawled out.

As these babies grew rapidly, they dripped more viscous yellow liquid, creating more puddles and stirring more bubbles...

“Waaa! Waaa! Waaa!”

They began to cry.

Just seeing this scene caused blood to flow from Gray’s eyes. The eye patch turned dark red as if he was moved to tears by the birth of life.

His mind was blank. He felt that every part of his body was nurturing a new life.

The sharp pain snapped him to his senses, and he instinctively took a step back.

The scene in front of Gray returned to normal. It was still the empty cathedral hall with wide windows that lacked maintenance, and a tall and magnificent dome. There was no viscous liquid that fell like rain, nor were there countless deformed babies and puddles everywhere.

“Huff, puff” Gray panted heavily.

The next second, he turned around and shouted as he ran, “Run!”

Thud thud thud! Gray rushed out of the municipal square.

He did not care about Parvi, Ol’ Keaton, and Weimer at all.

He was already considered a responsible captain for still remembering to warn his teammates under the current circumstances.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

Gray didn’t dare stop at all. Relying on his amazing physique despite his blurred vision, he ran all the way out of the strange town, back to the crude port, and onto his ship.

Ol’ Keaton, Parvi, and Weimer rushed back in less than ten seconds.

“Set sail!” Gray ordered.

Gray waited until the ship set sail before he bothered to check his injuries. He raised a hand to his eye and instantly felt moisture.

However, when he brought his hand to his eyes, he realized that it was not blood—just tears.

As he ran, he kept crying.

Grey’s brows knitted together, startled and suspicious.

Soon, he confirmed that he was not injured at all.

“What did you guys see?” He turned to look at Ol’ Keaton and the others.

Weimer looked at the captain. His eyes were red as if he had just cried.

He said with lingering fear, “I saw fireball after fireball.

“They fell from the roof with a whoosh and then exploded!

“Light. My eyes were filled with light. I felt like I was going blind. No, I’m already blind! Then, I felt like I was melting. It hurt. It really hurt.”

Weimer heaved a sigh of relief.

"Fortunately, Captain woke me up at that moment."

He rubbed his eyes and said in confusion and relief, "I'm fine now. It's just that I kept crying at first, but then I got better. It was like a bad dream."

What he meant was that the dream was very real. There were still lingering fears when he woke up, but he would be fine after a while.

Captain Gray nodded and carefully examined Weimer's eyes.

After confirming that there was really no problem, he looked at First Mate Ol' Keaton.

"What about you?"

Ol' Keaton looked at the distant coastline and the shrinking port and said in a reminiscent tone, "The entire cathedral collapsed. I fell to the ground with the surrounding pillars and stone bricks.

"It was bottomless. Moreover, my head, my flesh, and my skin fell at different speeds. They began to pull at each other. It hurt, it really hurt..."

The slightly loose skin and deep wrinkles on Ol' Keaton's face trembled as if he didn't want to recall any more of the incident.

He exhaled and said after a while,

"My entire body was about to be torn apart. Then, it was as if there were invisible hands around me. They pressed my hands, legs, head, skin, flesh, and bones to my internal organs with great force…

“I wished I could die as quickly as possible. Fortunately, I woke up the next second thanks to you, Captain.”

Weimer sighed with emotion.

“This is even more painful than what happened to me. If you hadn’t woken up in time, you might have seen yourself turn into a blood-colored meatball.”

Parvi listened quietly and said thankfully, “I wasn’t in that much pain.

“I saw darkness—darkness that made me feel at ease.

“Then, I fell asleep. It was like I was back in my bed until I was woken up by you, Captain.”

Captain Gray nodded slowly.

“From the looks of it, what we encountered or experienced is different. Moreover, we are left without any injuries.”

“It’s just some stress.” Ol’ Keaton affirmed the captain’s statement.

He then voiced his guess.

"Perhaps we were under an illusion or hallucinated for some other reason. And because everyone has different personalities and experiences, what we saw and experienced were different."

Before Ol' Keaton finished speaking, Parvi blurted out, "Mushrooms! Could it be those mushrooms? Those mushrooms were the strangest!"

"Yes, definitely!" Weimer agreed after being momentarily taken aback.

It was common knowledge that one could be poisoned and end up hallucinating after eating certain mushrooms. In such a strange place, it was reasonable for one to be affected just by approaching the mushrooms.

Captain Gray seriously recalled for a moment and said, "That's possible. There was a very faint, sweet smell in the air... The fragrance of some mushrooms?"

...

In the middle of a small town called Utopia, on the surface of the cathedral that was suspected to belong to the Church of Evernight, mushrooms suddenly became active.

They squirmed and crazily spewed out large amounts of spores. Before the spores landed, they had already grown into different mushrooms in the air. Then, they continued to create more spores.

And in the gap between the black bricks occupied by the mushrooms and green plants, pale-white, tiny, baby-like deformed palms squeezed out.

Silently, the entire cathedral collapsed, and a bottomless pit appeared in the ground.

The huge pit spread out, pulling the buildings over and shattering them into pieces.

Elsewhere in the town, the large number of houses that had originally stood tall had long disappeared, leaving behind large pieces of colorful glass-like traces.

In the depths of the ground, muffled sounds came one after another.

In just a few seconds, the place had completely fallen silent.

Buildings rose from the ground one after another, and the town quickly recovered as if it had a vitality of its own.

The furnishings in the houses were almost the same as before, but there were certain differences in their details. What was left had switched to the right, and what was far became close.

...

Late at night, on the ship.

Weimer, who could not sleep because of what happened during the day, came to the deck and breathed in the moist sea breeze.

“You’re still awake?” He saw the boatswain, Parvi.

Parvi was still wearing the clothes she wore during the day. She looked at the dark sea in the distance and said, “I was going to sleep, but I suddenly recalled some details after I closed my eyes.”

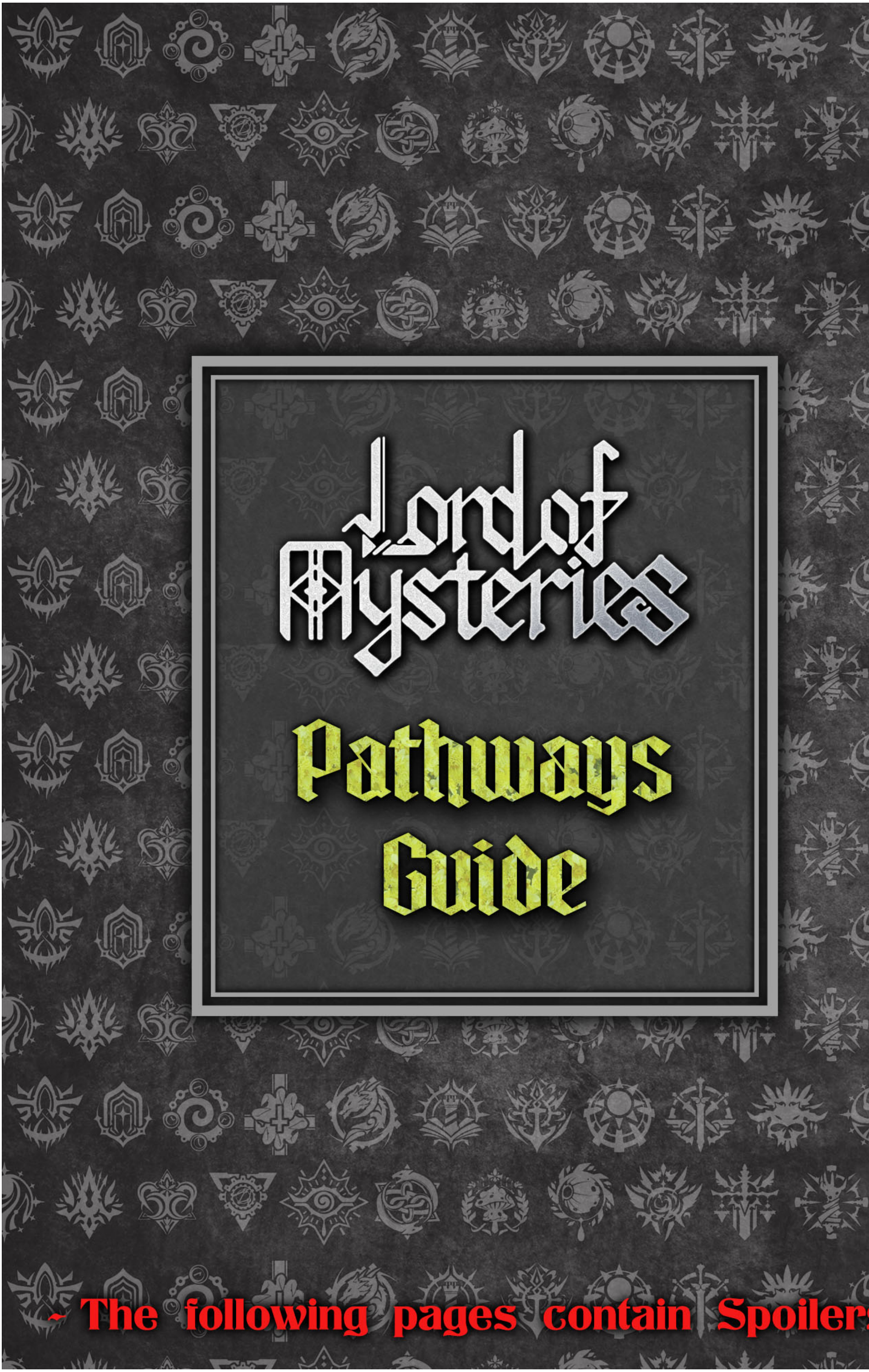
“What details?” Weimer asked curiously.

Parvi’s face reflected the red moonlight as she said, “There’s something else under the darkness I saw in the cathedral…”

Without waiting for Weimer to ask, she muttered to herself dreamily, “There were many skeletons, some children’s and some babies’. Some of them were normal, while others looked like monsters. It was packed with them, everywhere.

“Also, there seemed to be a raven hidden in the depths of the darkness.”

End of Side Storie



Lord of Mysteries

Pathways Guide

~ The following pages contain Spoiler

Father of Devils

"Father of Devils;
Lord of Deviants;
Source of Curses"

Sefirot : Tenebrous World

Father of Devils

- Chained Pathway -

XIV
TEMPERANCE

The Chained Pathway gains different types of mutant abilities, although they also inherit a curse. They can summon zomb jump through things with reflections, resist bullets with powerful defense, possess others, control ghosts, cast death-related spells, regenerate and hea themselves, and sacrifice rationality for more pow They have high strength, speed, and defense, but have some difficulty in controlling themselves.

Father of Devils

- Abyss Pathway -

XV
THE DEVIL

The Abyss Pathway gains demonic and devil-related abilities. They have high strength, perception, can cast ritua and sacrificial spells, cont and corrupt the desires o others, detect danger intuitively, increase in size, resist mental, poiso and curse attacks, and buff themselves for more strength and defense.

Lord of Mysteries

Image Gallery

~ The following pages contain Spoilers

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Lord of Mysteries
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诡秘
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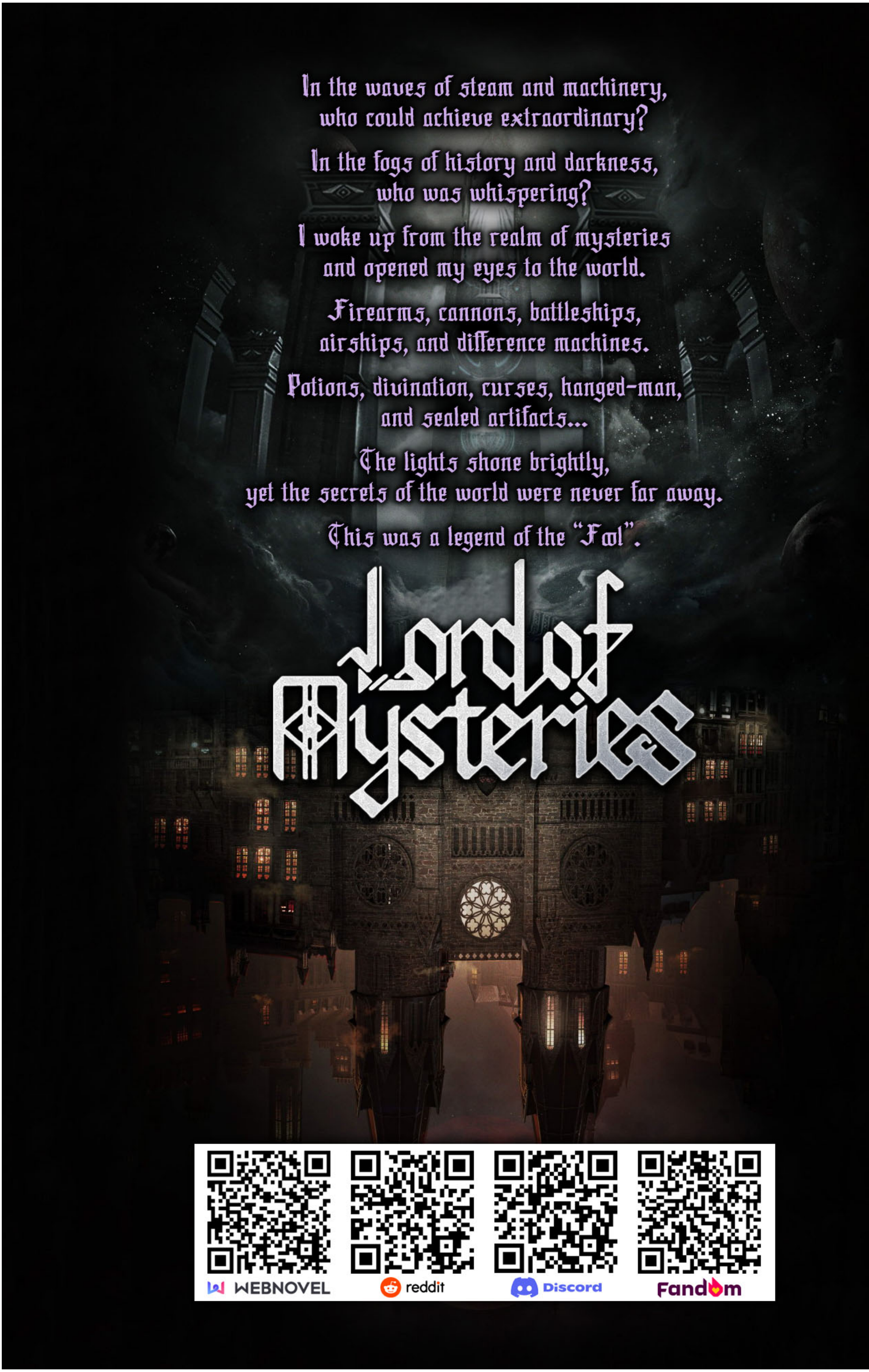
Mysterie



In the waves of steam and machinery,
who could achieve extraordinary?

In the fogs of history and darkness,
who was whispering?

I woke up from the realm of mysteries
and opened my eyes to the world.

Firearms, cannons, battleships,
airships, and difference machines.

Potions, divination, curses, hanged-man,
and sealed artifacts...

The lights shone brightly,
yet the secrets of the world were never far away.

This was a legend of the "Fool".

Lord of Mysteries

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